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# SPEECHES

ON

# THE IRISH QUESTION

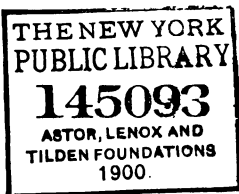
A COLLECTION OF SPEECHES DELIVERED BETWEEN  
1887 AND 1890

BY THE RIGHT HON.  
JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

*ISSUED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL  
UNION, BIRMINGHAM*



LONDON  
SWAN SONNENSCHN & CO.  
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1890



THE ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY PRESS.

## PREFACE.

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IN February, 1887, the National Liberal Union published a first volume of Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches on the Irish Question. Since then the controversy raised by Mr. Gladstone's change of front in 1886 has continued with unabated vigour, and has passed through several phases, which will be illustrated in the present collection of Speeches, delivered by the President of the Union, from April, 1887, to May, 1890.

In the early part of the former year the well intentioned effort at a re-union of the Liberal party, which is known as the Round Table Conference, came to an end without obtaining any satisfactory result, and from that time the Liberal Unionist party has drawn into closer and more cordial alliance with the Conservative defenders of the Union.

They have consistently supported the Government in the firm and impartial maintenance of the law in Ireland, and have been justified by the great improvement which has taken place in the condition of that country.

At the same time they have lost no opportunity to press forward the reforms both in the laws relating to land, and in the system of local government in Ireland, which are needed to complete its pacification, and to remove the last trace of grievance from the minds of all reasonable men.

They have also endeavoured to bring home to the minds of their countrymen the monstrous injustice of handing over the loyal Protestant population of Ulster—prosperous, indus-

trious, and law-abiding—to a Government which would be founded on the principles of the National League, and supported by the methods of the Plan of Campaign.

They have striven unsuccessfully to extract from Mr. Gladstone any definite statement of his future policy, or of the changes which he may be willing to make in his Home Rule proposals, and in these circumstances they have been led to emphasise the danger of blind submission to a leader who refuses to take the people of the United Kingdom into his confidence and seeks to obtain an unconditional authority to alter the constitution at his pleasure.

The uncertainty as to Mr. Gladstone's intentions has led to the formulation of other proposals for disintegrating the Empire into its several nationalities; and the demand for Home Rule is now not confined to Ireland, but has extended to a certain proportion of the population of Wales and of Scotland.

Meanwhile, the countenance afforded by Mr. Gladstone to the policy of obstruction in Parliament, and of disorder out of doors, has had its natural consequence. A section of his party, calling themselves the New Radicals, has bettered his instructions, and has done much to destroy the influence of the House of Commons and the authority of the law.

These are collateral results of the mischievous agitation for the dismemberment of the British Empire, and against them, as well as against the original proposal which has given rise to them, the Speeches of Mr. Chamberlain in the present volume are an earnest protest.

BIRMINGHAM, *August*, 1890.



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SPEECHES

ON

THE IRISH QUESTION

*MAY STILL BE HAD. PRICE ONE SHILLING.*

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME.

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## HOME RULE AND THE IRISH QUESTION.

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1881 AND 1887.

BY THE RIGHT HON.

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

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*JOHN BULL* says:—

"Mr. Chamberlain has done what we strongly suspect that neither Mr. Gladstone nor his lieutenants—of the English wing, that is—would care to do. He has published his various public utterances on *Home Rule and the Irish Question* since the middle of 1881. We have differed, and differ even now, from Mr. Chamberlain's views on Ireland; but he has rendered great and conspicuous services to his country, which no patriotic Englishman will ever forget. In point of style, these speeches are excellent for their incisiveness and lucidity. They are an important contribution to the literature of the subject."

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*London : SWAN SONNENSCHN & CO., Paternoster Square.*

# SPEECHES ON THE IRISH QUESTION

BY THE RIGHT HON.

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

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*AYR, April 13th, 1887.*

## CRIME AND COERCION.

[The following speech was delivered in the Town Hall, Ayr, under the auspices of the Ayr Branch of the National Radical Union.]

MR. CHAIRMAN, ladies and gentlemen,—It is my first duty to acknowledge, with thanks, the resolution which you have just passed, and to acknowledge, at the same time, the cordial welcome which you have been good enough to give me on the occasion of my first public visit to your classic town. (Cheers.) When I accepted, some few months ago, the invitation of your committee to come here, and to deliver a speech upon political matters, I could not have foreseen that, at the moment for the fulfilment of my promise, we should be in the most critical stage of the great controversy which has so long divided the nation. (Cheers.) There is no doubt that the issue which is now presented to the people of Great Britain is the gravest issue which has had to be decided during our time and generation. (Cheers.) And, for myself, I feel the responsibility of speaking at all at such a time; and, although in what I have to say to you I shall be unable to refrain from severe condemnation of the policy which has brought us to such a pass—(cheers and hisses)—of the policy which has provoked and stimulated disorder in Ireland—(cheers and uproar)—and which has shattered and wrecked the Liberal party—that great instru-

ment of progress—and delayed, for I know not how long, the reforms upon which we were once united—yet I shall endeavour so to word my condemnation that it shall convey no imputation of motives upon those who differ from me, and shall include no barren or useless recrimination. (Cheers.)

### THE OLD LIBERAL POLICY.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, let us, in the first place, consider what the situation in Ireland is, and what are the causes which have led to it. For that we must go back to the end of 1879, or the beginning of 1880, when a Liberal Government, of which I had the honour to be a member, came into power. At that time there had been a bad harvest. Agriculture was depressed. There was great distress in Ireland amongst small tenants. Evictions were threatened, and outrages were commencing. The Liberal Government thought it necessary at once to deal with the emergency, and they brought in a bill which was known as the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, and which was intended to prevent unnecessary evictions. Unfortunately, that bill was thrown out by the House of Lords. I have never ceased to regret it. It was a serious, and almost a fatal, mistake; and in a very short time matters grew much worse. Outrages and crime of all kinds became more rife than they had been almost for a generation; and, accordingly, in the next session of Parliament—in 1881—this same Liberal Government found it to be its first duty, in order to maintain the law, to bring in a Coercion Bill. You talk of severe coercion! (Hear, hear.) That was a bill for severe coercion, if you like. (Laughter.) For it enabled the Government of Ireland to put into prison any man—without trial—on suspicion. That bill was pressed through Parliament, and carried; and, after it was passed, we sought to remedy the deep-seated causes of disorder, and we brought in and passed that great measure of reform which is known as the Land Act of 1881. Well, this severe Coercion Bill was not a success. Public feeling—public conscience—was against the keeping in prison, without trial, of more than a thousand of our fellow-citizens, who were only suspected of being guilty of crime; and, accordingly, in 1882, when this bill was about to expire, the Government brought in another Coercion Bill, as a substitution for the former. It was the

bill that was known as the Crimes Act of 1882. That bill was successful. Immediately after it was passed, and under the administration of Lord Spencer, the crimes and outrages, which had mounted up by thousands, fell rapidly until they reached the lowest number that has been known within the last twenty years. (Cheers.) This result was produced, as I believe, partly by the operation of the Crimes Act, and partly by the beneficent operation of the Land Act of 1881. Matters seemed settling down and we hoped that the period of disorder was past; and in 1885, when the Crimes Act was about to expire, the Government announced to Parliament that it was its intention to propose the renewal of the most valuable clauses of this Coercion Bill, and that, at the same time, it would make further proposals in the direction of an amendment and improvement of the Land Act of 1881.

#### THE NEW DEPARTURE.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, if you have followed me so far, you will see that up to this time the Government and the Liberal party were pursuing consistently what has always been the policy of Liberalism: that is to say, that while, on the one hand, they recognised, as the first duty of any Government, the maintenance of the law—respect for the authority of the law—at the same time, they were anxious to amend the law wherever it proved defective. (Cheers.) But in 1885 the Government resigned, upon Mr. Childers' Budget. A Tory Government came in, and a short time afterwards there was a dissolution; and the dissolution brought about a change in the balance of parties, to which my friend Mr. Cameron Corbett has already referred. It gave to a small minority of the House of Commons—to Mr. Parnell and eighty-five of his followers—the control of the Parliamentary situation—(hear, hear)—and from that moment you must date the entire reversal of the traditional policy of Liberalism. (Cheers.) From that moment for the programme of the Liberal party you have had substituted the programme of the Convention of Chicago. (Cheers.) At the present time the avowed policy of the majority of the Liberal party is that you must end disorder in Ireland, not by compelling evil-doers to do well, but by surrendering to the law-breakers the authority and the influence of

the Government. That is the issue which is put before the people of this country. That is the issue which is put before you in plausible and specious terms as conciliation *versus* coercion. (Loud cheers and hisses.)

#### THE LIBERAL UNIONIST POLICY.

But, gentlemen, when the general election took place, the party of the Liberal Unionists maintained that this was not the right way of stating the question. We maintained that there was a third alternative, which was neither Home Rule as it was proposed by the late Government, nor coercion. We said that, according to the traditional policy of the Liberal party, we were bound to maintain the ordinary law of the land, but that, at the same time, we were equally bound to seek and to find the causes of the trouble which existed, and to endeavour to remove them by remedial legislation. (Cheers.) We said that the circumstances had materially changed in the last few years. We said that now we had a Parliament—democratic in the best sense of the word—representative as no previous Parliament had ever been of the whole of the people of the United Kingdom ; and we said that this Parliament, sprung from the people, and resting on the people, would do justice to the people wherever they might be found. (Cheers.) We said that they would be generous to the claims of the Irish tenants, that they would be ready to remove any proved grievance ; and we said that they would be ready also to give the widest possible extension of local government to all parts of the United Kingdom that was consistent with the safety of the Empire and the best interests of the people. (Cheers.) We called upon the Irish leader, and, above all, we called upon our own leaders—the heretofore trusted and revered leaders of the Liberal party—we called upon them to abandon a scheme which the country would be sure to reject, and which had been proved to be impracticable and dangerous ; and we expressed our willingness—our anxiety—to join with them in seeking for a safer and more practicable conclusion. (Cheers.) And, gentlemen, if our invitation had been accepted—if the sympathies of the people of Great Britain had been invoked for the removal of proved grievances, and, at the same time, the Irish leaders had made their influence—their undoubted influence—felt in order to prevent agita-



tion in Ireland from degenerating into actual breach of the law, then you would not have heard much about coercion. Coercion would not have been necessary when people voluntarily obeyed the law. (Cheers.) I might have been here to-night to congratulate you upon the passing into law—upon the placing on the statute-book of the United Kingdom—of measures earnestly desired, long waited for by the population, and which now are indefinitely postponed, owing to obstruction in Parliament and outrage in Ireland. (Cheers.)

#### THE REAL AUTHORS OF COERCION.

Our alternative was rejected. It did not suit the plans of the Irish leaders, or of their paymasters in America—(cheers)—that there should be peace in Ireland. Still, in spite of the refusal, when Parliament met in the autumn of 1886, the prospect was still hopeful. Every one who went to Ireland—every one who knew anything of Ireland whatever—told you at that time there was a probability—more than a probability, almost a certainty—that the tenants of Ireland, weary of the constant agitation, the losses it involved, and the uncertainty which it produced, were ready to take advantage of the great benefits which the Land Act had brought to them; that rents were being paid freely; that the relations between landlord and tenant were improving; and that the country was once more settling down. Why has that fair prospect been clouded over? Why has the Government of the country, on its responsibility as an Executive, to come once more to Parliament to ask for further powers? You must not look for an answer in Ireland. You will not find it there. You must look for it in America. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) You must look for it amongst the avowed enemies of Great Britain. (Cheers.) In 1886, there was a great Convention held in Chicago, and at this Convention Irish sympathisers from all parts of the United States were present. Many of them, no doubt, honestly sympathised with their fellow-countrymen in Ireland. Many of them were actuated by very different motives, which concerned simply American politics and the Irish vote of the country. England is not the only country in the world where the Irish vote is of consideration to statesmen. (Cheers.) But the Convention was also attended by delegates of a different stamp—by the apostles of dynamite, of outrage, and of

assassination—by men who have paid outragemongers, and who have promoted outrages in this country. (Cheers.)

#### THE AIM OF THE PARNELLITES.

To this Convention there were sent delegates from this country—delegates from the Irish Parliamentary Constitutional party. (Cheers and laughter.) The chief of these delegates was Mr. Redmond, a member of Parliament, and to his speech I desire to call your special attention. At this Convention, in the first instance, it appeared likely that there would be a division of opinion. But there were secret confabulations and private meetings held, and an agreement was come to, and this agreement was declared openly at a public meeting of the Convention. Mr. Redmond acted as delegate for Mr. Parnell and the Parliamentary party. It is that representative capacity which gives importance to what he said. Now, will you listen to some portion of his speech? He said :—

“ Now, what is the one great principle underlying this movement? It is the unqualified recognition of the distinct nationality of Ireland.” We are told sometimes that Mr. Gladstone’s bill would have been accepted, and was accepted, by the Irish party as a final settlement of the Irish question. That is not Mr. Redmond’s opinion. (Cheers and laughter.) That was not Mr. Redmond’s statement to the Convention of Chicago. Mr. Gladstone’s bill did not recognise the unqualified nationality of Ireland. It deprived Ireland of all the chief attributes of a nation. (Hear, hear.) It made of Ireland a subject province. It deprived Ireland of a colonial or a foreign policy, of control over its taxation, of the right to deal with the Established Church. It limited it in reference to education. It cribbed, it cabined, and it confined it in a score of different ways. I do not say that it was wrong in so doing. (Cheers.) But I say that we were justified in declaring that, under these circumstances, it was a bill which would never be accepted by any Nationalist Irishmen, or any one who claimed the entire independence and national recognition of his country. (Cheers.) Well, then, Mr. Redmond went on to say—

“ We ”—(that is, the Irish party in this country)—“ We are not working for the removal of grievances. (Cheers and laughter.) We are not simply labouring for the amelioration of the material condition of our people.”

(Hear, hear.) You hear a good deal now of the Irish tenant. His condition is represented to you as worthy of your sympathy and compassion. You are urged to vote against coercion, because it will prejudice the Irish tenant. These arguments come very badly out of the mouths of men who have openly declared that their object is not the removal of material grievances. (Cheers.) They wish to leave them in existence as a lever, and an instrument in order that they may obtain the unqualified recognition of the nationality of Ireland. (Cheers.)

"The principle," says Mr. Redmond, "at the back of this movement to-day is the same principle which formed the soul of other Irish movements in the past—rebellion against the rule of the strangers. It is the principle which Owen Rowe O'Neill vindicated on the banks of the Blackwater; the principle which inspired Fitzgerald, and for which Emmett sacrificed his life."

That principle may be good or bad. I am not arguing that part of the question at this moment. But what I want to call your attention to is, that the object of the Irish party is to maintain the principle for which Wolff Tone and Emmet sacrificed their lives—that is, the principle of the independence of the Irish—entire separation between the two countries, and not, as they now pretend, for political purposes, the removal of grievances, or the amelioration of the people. (Cheers.)

#### A POLICY OF ANARCHY.

Now, gentlemen, how do you think this principle was to be prosecuted by the Irish party in England? Well, Mr. Redmond is kind enough to tell us, through the medium of his speech to the Convention of Chicago. He says:—

"I assert here to-day that the Government of Ireland by England is an impossibility; and I believe it to be our duty to make it so". (Cheers.)

Now the secret is out. (Laughter and loud cheers.) This is why the British Government have to ask for a strengthening of the law. (Cheers.) It is because the leaders of the Irish people refuse to join with the democracy of Great Britain, of England and of Scotland, in the removal of grievances, and because they are determined

to make the government of the Queen impossible. (Cheers.) And, gentlemen, unfortunately, for the first time in our history—I hope for the last time—the Liberal party, or the bulk of it, has identified itself with such a policy as this—a policy of rebellion and anarchy. (Cheers.) Talk of the responsibility which rests with Liberal Unionists! That is a slight matter compared with the responsibility which rests upon Liberal statesmen who have enjoyed the confidence of the country, and who are now lending their aid to a programme which, if it succeed, will result in overthrowing the supremacy of our Parliament, will destroy the authority of our law, will break up the unity of the United Kingdom, and will pave the way to the dissolution of this great Empire, which has been the envy and the admiration of the world. (Cheers.)

#### MAKING GOVERNMENT IMPOSSIBLE.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, we have to see how this policy of making government impossible has been carried out. After the prorogation in 1886, Irish members descended upon Ireland like a flight of locusts—(laughter)—and commenced and carried through the agitation. I have got some extracts from their speeches which illustrate the spirit in which they commenced their propaganda. There is one speech by Mr. John O'Connor, made on 21st November 1886, and reported in the *Freeman's Journal*. It is always necessary to give these particulars—(laughter and cheers)—because I have observed, that whenever you quote an Irish Nationalist member, he always says he has been badly reported. (Laughter.) Mr. O'Connor said he had lately been using language in favour of moderation and conciliation to such an extent in England that he feared he would not know how to address a Land League meeting. (Laughter.) He need not have apologised—(laughter)—either for himself or his colleagues. They knew how to sauce the meat so as to suit the palates of those whom they addressed. (Laughter.) But think of this. These gentlemen openly avow that when they are addressing English audiences, as they are now doing, they are gulling them with words of conciliation and moderation which are intended for English consumption—for those ingenuous Britons—(cheers and laughter)—and are totally

unsuitable for the robust appetites of Irish Leaguers. (Renewed cheers.) But here is another suggestive passage. This is from Mr. O'Kelly, M.P. (Laughter.) He was speaking at Bredoe, in the county of Roscommon, and it is from the *Roscommon Herald* of November 9th, 1886. (Laughter.) "We, on our part," said Mr. O'Kelly, who seems to be a candid sort of person—(laughter)—"we told the people of England that you are not able to pay without taking from your farms those things that are necessary to the proper cultivation of your farms. (Interruption.) If you allow yourselves to be intimidated by agents and landlords into parting with your stock to pay a rent which the land has not produced——" (Interruption.) I assure you this is a passage, from one of your friends, well worth listening to—(cheers and laughter)—"If you allow yourselves to be intimidated by agents and landlords, and pay a rent which has not been produced, there will be a strong argument next year, when Parliament assembles, to shew we were not speaking the truth, when we said you were unable to pay". (Cheers.) Now, that is very Irish. (Laughter and cheers,) Here is a man who told the English Parliament that the tenants could not pay. Then he goes to the Irish tenants, and says—"If you do pay there will be a strong argument for saying we were not telling the truth"—(laughter)—and "that fact will not only tell against our power and influence with the English people, but it will tell heavily against you in the settlement of the land question when it comes". (Renewed laughter.) Now, gentlemen, seriously, that confession throws a great light upon the agitation in Ireland. Here is a case where tenants were perfectly able to pay, and willing to pay, where a man—a member of Parliament—goes to them and says "Don't pay". "Don't pay on any account." "If you do you will destroy our influence in Parliament with the people of England." "You will destroy"—heaven save the mark—"our character for veracity." (Loud laughter and cheers.) "Above all you will prejudice your position when the final settlement of the land question comes."

#### THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

But these suggestions, iniquitous as I regard them, are thrown into the shade by the promulgation of the notorious Plan of Campaign—

(loud laughter and cheers)—by Mr. Dillon. Now, here is a very curious fact. There has not been a single Liberal leader of reputation—and even Mr. Parnell himself may be joined to them—who has dared to approve of the morality of the Plan of Campaign. (Cheers.) But then there is another fact that is still more noteworthy, and that is that not one of these gentlemen has had the courage to condemn it. (Cheers.) I was speaking of the Plan of Campaign a short time ago, and I said in language, which I do not think was one whit too strong, that it was the most immoral conspiracy which had ever been devised in a civilised land. Now, let us see what it was. It was a plan under which the tenant was told that, after having got a fair rent fixed for him by a judicial tribunal, he was to pay no attention whatever to that rent. He was to agree with his fellow tenants how much of it they would choose to pay: and, having done that, he was to offer this amount to his landlord, and, if his landlord declined, he was then to refuse to pay anything, and he was to hand over any money that he had put aside to the irresponsible trustees of the National League. (Laughter and cheers.) There was no pretence whatever of taking into account the individual circumstances of estates. All were to be treated to the same plumb and level, with no pretence to give consideration, on the broad principles of justice, to any claims whatever on the part of the owner of the property. The debtor was to say in every case how much of his debt he was to pay; and in defiance of the law—in defiance of the amended law which had been passed in his interest—he was to pay that and nothing more. When I say the debtor was to settle this I have not said all, because we must do this justice to the Irish tenant, and say that if only he were let alone he is one of the most honest of men. (Cheers.) He has shown again and again that he was perfectly willing to meet, as far as his means would allow, his just obligations. (Cheers.) But it is the League—the National League—which steps in—this combination and conspiracy which steps in—between the tenant and his obligations, between the tenant and his conscience, and which says how much he will pay and under a threat, prevents him from paying more. You may be certain that this nefarious device would fail, and fail disastrously, if it were not for the authority which its proceedings obtain from the intimidation, the outrage—aye, and the murders which accompany it. (Cheers.) Those are the sanctions to which they are able to appeal,

and which enable them to maintain their tyrannical usurpation over the rights and consciences of men. (Cheers.)

### A SLANDER ON TRADES UNIONS.

Now, I think I ought to give you some few illustrations to show the nature of this coercion which is being exercised over the Irish people. (Cheers.) You are told that a bill which is now before the House of Commons is a bill for the repression of liberty. Liberty to do what? Liberty to commit theft, liberty to injure women, liberty to ruin industrious men? (Hisses and cheers.) Which are you hissing—the crime? Or are you hissing the punishment? (Renewed uproar, and cries of “Turn him out”.)

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN—We are not going to turn anybody out. (Loud Cheers.) I do not in the least complain of the interruption of that gentleman. It may, perhaps, lengthen my speech a little; but I will promise before I sit down to give him ample satisfaction. (Cheers.) I was asking when he interrupted me, what is the liberty which some people desire to preserve? Is it, I asked, the liberty to commit theft, to outrage and insult women, to ruin industrious men—and even to commit murder? Is it the liberty to violate every law, human and divine—(cheers)—which you think it wrong to restrict? I will give you illustrations of every one of these points. (Cheers.) But before I do so, one word on another collateral point. It has been said that the National League is a great Trades Union, and that this bill, if it were passed, would be a bill to restrict combination. Now, I want to say that that is a slander—(hear hear)—on these great industrial organisations of the United Kingdom, which have done so much for the advantage of the working classes. It is a slander which every member of them is entitled to resent. (Cheers.) Only once in the history of Trades Unionism was there ever a case which, in the slightest degree, paralleled the proceedings of the National League. There was one case twenty years ago or thereabouts at Sheffield, under the guidance of a scoundrel named Broadhead, in which particular tradesmen were subject to a terrorism very similar to that which prevails in many parts of Ireland. They were boycotted as far as the means of this ruffian permitted him to do it. They were subjected to intimidation, there was injury to their property, there were personal outrages: worse than

all, there were murders. But when the Royal Commission threw, **as** it did, a flood of light on these iniquities there rose at once a perfect outburst of national horror, not only throughout the public generally, but from every Trades Union throughout the United Kingdom. From that day to this, Trades Unionism has never been stained by a similar infamy. (Cheers.)

### THE REAL COERCION.

But, unfortunately, there are parts of Ireland where outrage and assassination are not unpopular. It is the victims of these crimes that incur public resentment and odium. You want instances of insult to women.

The man in the body of the hall, who interrupted previously—"You said outrage of women. We know what that means." (Cheers, and cries of "Order".)

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN—I think the gentleman is under a misapprehension if he means by outrage the grossest outrage of all. I do not mean that. (Cheers.) We talk of outrages, and we mean by that personal violence and insult. (Cheers and hisses.) And there are plenty of cases, unfortunately of personal violence and insult—which I call outrage—upon women, and even upon children in Ireland. (Cheers.) But I shall give you a case. You all recollect the terrible murder of Mr. Curtin, which took place a considerable time ago. Mr. Curtin was murdered. His assassins have never been discovered. Some of his family remain in the farm which he occupied. They have been the mark of constant outrage and insult ever since—they have been the mark for a relentless and a fiendish persecution. (Hear, hear.) They have not been allowed, so far as their oppressors could prevent it, to buy or sell. They have been boycotted. Their servants have been insulted. (Oh.) It is evident that there are some sympathisers with Irish outragers, who would also be perfectly willing to insult innocent persons. (Hear, hear.) The women of the Curtin family have been forbidden even the exercise of their religious duties. They have not been able to go to church, because they would have been insulted by the congregation. They have had to hear mass—they are Catholics—in the sacristy of the chapel. (Shame.) Their lives have been made intolerable to them. And,



remember, what is their offence? They are the widow and orphan children of a man who has been murdered. (Shame.) And these people, their lives having become intolerable to them, have been anxious, naturally, to leave the country. They are not even allowed to sell their farm. Placards have been published saying that any one that took the farm from them should have the death of old Curtin. (Shame.) And at this moment their persecutors seem to be determined to accomplish the ruin of the family, as they have accomplished the murder of the father. Take another case. You all know the particulars of the Phoenix Park assassination, which filled the world with horror. Mr. Parnell, the other day in the House of Commons, had the audacity to say that the authorship of these murders was discovered owing to the denunciation of himself and his colleagues. That is absolutely without foundation. They were discovered owing to the operation of one of the clauses in the Crimes Act, which the Government are now proposing to renew—(cheers)—and they were only discovered many months after the denunciation to which Mr. Parnell refers. But was that denunciation sincere? Test it by these facts. The foreman of the jury which convicted these men of the murder, which Mr. Parnell himself has denounced, has since been persecuted for the verdict which he gave. An attempt to assassinate him was made in the streets of Dublin. He was shot. That is not the worst. That might be the result of a private vengeance. But he has been boycotted and reduced to ruin in his business in consequence of his action as an honest jurymen in the vilest case of assassination. (Cheers.)

#### THE DEMORALISATION OF POLITICS.

Take a more recent case. Take the case of the man Byars, who was murdered about two or three months ago. Byars was not a tenant. He was merely in temporary charge of a farm from which some one had been evicted. He was a young man, about 35 years of age. He had a wife and three children. He was an industrious, honest man, who had never given any offence to any human being, other than the offence which he had committed against the unwritten law of the League by occupying, temporarily, an evicted farm. As

he was returning home one night late, with two policemen, a band of ruffians, divided into parties on each side of the road, waited until he and his companions had passed, and then, point blank, at twenty yards distance, poured into them a volley from both sides of the road, wounded the three of them—wounded Byars, so that in two or three hours he died in agony.

A VOICE—"Watch yourself," followed by cries of "Put that man out".

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN said—No. Bring that man up here. (Cheers, and cries of "Police," and continued shouts of "Put him out".) Gentlemen, now you have before you an instance of the demoralisation of politics—(loud cheers)—which has been produced by the action of the leaders of the Liberal party. (Shame.) I am relating to you facts which at least I should have supposed even opponents would listen to with silence, with horror, and with shame. (Loud cheers.) And when I tell you of assassination, there is a man in this hall who says, "Take care of yourself". (Cheers.) Has the time come when we cannot discuss political matters in this country without bandying threats of assassination? (Loud cheers.) Those are the proceedings of the parties that were represented at the Convention of Chicago. (Loud cheers.) I am sorry to know that they have any representatives in Scotland. (Cheers, and cries of "No".) Well, I probably was wrong. That voice was heard in Scotland, but probably it was not a Scottish voice. (Loud cheers.) Now, let me go on with my statement. I think it necessary to bring home to you the acts of terrorism which have made it necessary to introduce a bill which is called a bill of coercion. I have told you of the assassination of Byars; but I have not yet mentioned what is the fact—that so great was the fear in the country around of the proceedings of the assassination party that it was impossible to find a coffin in the district in which to put the remains. (Sensation.) One had to be procured from a great distance; and when the widow of the murdered man accompanied the dead body of her husband to the station, she was jeered and hooted as she passed along. That is outrage, sir. (Pointing to the gentleman who had interrupted, amid loud cheers.) There is one more case. I might keep you here all night with sad and tragic histories of this kind; but I give you one more case, and that will be sufficient, and that is the recent case of Murphy, who being a small

tenant—one of the class which specially calls for the commiseration of the League orators—a small tenant keeping a farm for which he paid £3 a year of rent—was sitting at his fireside with his wife and children chatting pleasantly, when eight masked men came into the room and demanded his arms. He gave up a revolver which he had in the house at once, and then the hypocrites shook hands with him, telling him not to be afraid, and then called out to one of their number, who came back again and shot the man in the legs, tearing of his foot by the ankle—leaving him to die in an hour or two afterwards. (“Shame.”) I say, gentlemen, that so long as these crimes remain unpunished—so long as there are others undiscovered—it is an abuse of language to say there is a restriction of liberty or unnecessary coercion when you strengthen the law in order to punish the evil-doers and to protect the innocent.

#### THE AMOUNT OF AGRARIAN CRIME.

But then it is said the bill is unnecessarily stringent. I saw in a letter which has recently been published that it is the worst, and most causeless, and most insulting bill ever brought into Parliament. I should have thought that such cases as those I have referred to, and many others I might have added, gave sufficient cause for some alteration of the law when the law was proved to be incapable of dealing with them. But when it is said that this is the most stringent—the worst bill, in the sense of being the most stringent—I take exception to that statement altogether. I have already told you that, in the last Government of Mr. Gladstone, two bills were passed, both of which were more stringent—very much more arbitrary and stringent—than the proposals contained in the bill now before Parliament. (Cheers.) I am told too by those who know something of Scottish law that there is really very little in the measure that is not already contained in the ordinary law of Scotland. (Hear, hear.) Certainly, as far as I know anything of Scotland, it is not a coerced or tyrannised country. It is able to take very good care of itself, and it certainly has not been oppressed by its law. But we are told that the bill is causeless, and the ground for that statement is found in the comparatively small number of outrages which have been committed

recently. It is said that they are much less in number than they have been at previous periods when Coercion Bills have been introduced. Well, if that were true it would not prove much. It might be the result of the absolute success of the system of intimidation which has been practised. (Hear, hear.) When a threat is sufficient, it is not necessary to resort to blows. If a man says, "Your money, or your life," and you give him your money, he is very foolish if he takes your life. (Laughter.) Mr. Biggar, member of Parliament, appears to have appreciated that view when he said some time ago that "We"—that means the League—"do not recommend the murder of landlords. (Laughter.) That is an unnecessary measure." (Renewed laughter.) And even Mr. Parnell himself, about the same time, when he was speaking after a brutal murder had been committed at New Ross, said that "these extreme measures of procedure—(a laugh)—are quite unnecessary—(laughter)—as long as the tenants have a sufficient and satisfactory organisation". Well, the tenants have what I suppose Mr. Parnell considers a sufficient and satisfactory organisation, and under those circumstances it would not be surprising if outrages diminished, even if they disappeared altogether, and yet the state of the country would be thoroughly unsatisfactory. But, gentlemen, it is not true that outrages have diminished. (Hear, hear.) I have been arguing upon the assumption that they might have done so, but they have not. Now, just let me give you a few figures, because they are very suggestive indeed. In 1884 the number of agrarian outrages in Ireland was 762; in 1885 they were 944; in 1886 they were 1056. Now—mark this—in 1885 Mr. Gladstone's Government proposed to renew the clauses of the Crimes Act, and they did so on this foundation, that in the year previous there had been 762 outrages. Now, the same gentlemen profess that the Crimes Bill is perfectly unnecessary, when there are 1056 outrages—(laughter and cheers)—or nearly 300 more. Gentlemen—(a voice—"That takes in all crimes".) I should be sorry to offer anything in the nature of a rude contradiction, but your statement is absolutely inaccurate. (Laughter and cheers.) The statement which I have given to the meeting is a statement of agrarian crime. I really think these interruptions show upon what slight foundation of knowledge they are made. (Cheers.)

## A CHOICE OF COERCIONS.

Well, gentlemen, I ask you whether, on a review of the whole facts I have laid before you, you must not come to this conclusion—that your choice is not between coercion and conciliation, but that you must have coercion of one kind or another—that you must either have coercion of moonlighters, or coercion by moonlighters. (Hear, hear.) You must either strengthen the law, or you must surrender all law to those who break it. And, for my part, I say that, though I hate coercion—I hate the word and the thing—I wish none of us had ever any need to be forced to do anything—(cheers)—although I hate coercion—yet I say that all who value law as the highest expression of the popular will, as the defence of liberty, as a terror to evil-doers, and the praise of those who do well—(cheers)—are bound to give favourable consideration to the proposals of the Executive Government of the country, when they ask for further powers to cope with anarchy and disorder. (Loud cheers.)

## REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

There is only one case in which I would refuse that support. I should think the Government were not worthy of any support if, at the same time that they are doing their utmost to maintain order and sustain the law, they did not also show their readiness to amend the law where amendment was shown to be necessary. (Cheers.) There is only one reasonable objection, in my opinion, that has been taken, or can be taken, to the general scope of the bill, which is now before the House of Commons, and that is this. It has been said this bill, giving greater power to authorities, will be used to enforce the law where the law is harsh and unjust. It will enable bad landlords to exact excessive rents from their tenants. I do not say that it is probable, but it is possible, that rents which were fair a few years ago, may have become unfair owing to the fall in prices. It is possible that landlords may here and there refuse to make abatements which have become necessary, and which all generous and just landlords would willingly make. It is possible that such landlords may press their right to the extreme—may secure,

if they are not stopped, evictions and injustice to the tenants ; and, therefore, I say it is the duty of the Government to make this absolutely impossible. But that is what they are doing by the bill which they have introduced into the House of Lords for the amendment of the land law. (Cheers.)

### THE LAND ACT OF 1887.

That is a bill which I venture to say—and I say it deliberately—will make an unjust eviction absolutely impossible. (Cheers.) Now how is this bill received by the friends of the Irish tenant—by the Irish Land League, which may not perhaps be the same thing? (Laughter.) Observe that Mr O'Brien, who, when he was in the House of Commons, was certainly one of the bitterest of the Irish members, and who is now the editor of *United Ireland*, was interviewed by a London correspondent immediately the bill was introduced in the House of Lords, and was asked what he thought of it. He had not had time to consult with his colleagues, and he probably gave his real, unbiassed opinion ; and this is what he said :—“ I don't believe it is intended to pass. If I were a landlord I should look upon this bill with greater terror than the tenants can possibly regard the Coercion Bill. (Laughter.) It is a greater blow at the landlords than the Plan of Campaign.” I think that was a very exaggerated description of it ; but, at all events, it is the most generous offer which has yet been made to the Irish tenant by any Government, Tory or Liberal. (Hear, hear.) Now just consider what this bill proposes to do. In the first place, it proposes to include the whole of the leaseholders in the advantages of the Land Act, from which hitherto they have been constantly excluded by the refusal of the Liberal Government to include them. That is an enormous boon. It affects 100,000 of the tenants of Ireland. (Cheers.) It is an act of justice which I am very glad to see performed, although I am very sorry that the honour of it cannot be claimed by a Liberal instead of a Tory Government. (A voice, “ You'll be a Tory yet,” and laughter.) Well you will have to wait a long while. (Laughter and cheers.) Then in the second place, this bill proposes that wherever a tenant is honestly unable to pay his rent, he shall be able to go before the Court, and to arrange a composition with his landlord, both for the

amount of his rent and the amount of his arrears, and to continue in his holding at a reduced rent to be fixed by the Court. (Cheers.) Now, I ask you is it possible to do more than that? Is it possible to meet more completely, more generously, more justly, the demand that no tenant should be evicted for the failure to pay an unjust rent? (Cheers.)

#### THE LAW AND THE LEAGUE.

But how was this bill described by the Irish leaders when they came to consider it? It would not do to allow that remedial measures were likely to be passed by this Government; and, accordingly, Mr Parnell got up in his place and denounced the bill beforehand—before it had been printed—after the description in the House of Lords—denounced it as an indirect method of coercion, and as a stab in the back for the Irish tenant. When you see that this is the language used by Mr. Parnell with regard to such a bill as that I have described to you, a good deal of discount should, you may think, be taken off the language in which he describes the Coercion Bill as the most infamous measure that has ever been introduced into Parliament. (Cheers.) No, gentlemen; Mr. Parnell and his friends desire the continuance of the agitation in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) They do not want—they have told us by the mouth of Mr Redmond—they are not working for the removal of grievances. They are striving to make the government of the country impossible—(cheers)—and no remedial legislation in this country will be allowed a chance. I am convinced, while the unwritten law of the League is supreme, the British Government and the British people may do their best, and they will fail so long as the mandatories of the Convention of Chicago arrogantly block the way. (Cheers.) This obstruction must be removed. But how? You may remove it, if you please, by an abject surrender. You may give up all to which Liberals and Conservatives alike have hitherto adhered. You may give up the rights of property—aye, and you may even risk the lives of those who trusted to your honour, your fellow-subjects in Ireland. You may do all this, and in doing it you will sully and destroy the reputation of the country, which is founded upon the way in which it has always kept faith and honour with those who have trusted to it. (Cheers.) You, gentlemen, are the masters—

you the people of Great Britain. But if you possess the virtues of the great democracies of the past and of the present, you will meet with a firm front the advocates of disorder. You will not yield to threats. You will refuse to bow to the intimidation which is attempted to be practised upon you. You will maintain the ancient name and fame of your country. (Cheers.) Once more you will show

Naught can make us rue  
If Britain to herself doth prove but true.

#### THE ENEMY WITHIN THE GATES.

I do not conceal from you—I cannot conceal from myself—the gravity—the momentous gravity—of the struggle in which we are engaged. There is difficulty and annoyance—aye, and danger—for all of us. There is no one who has taken a prominent part in this controversy who has not been threatened and marked down for assassination. (Hear, hear.) That is, perhaps, a small matter. I do not know if they are in greater danger than the soldier on the battlefield; and of this I am certain: that, if any of these fall, there will be scores and hundreds in this country of ours ready and willing to take their place. (Loud and continued cheers.) But what adds bitterness to the situation is the fact that our foes are of our own household. Our irreconcilable enemies have the sympathy and support of those whom we desire should be our friends. (Cheers.) I listened the other night in the House of Commons to Mr. Parnell, when, under the specious guise of warning, he told us that if this bill passed there would be a renewal of outrage in our streets, and dynamite explosions, and attempts at assassination of our statesmen. And our colleagues and our friends listened with mild complacency to the grim and dangerous suggestion which was made in their hearing, and which may yet prove the death-warrant to some or other of us. (Cheers, and cries of “Shame”.) Well, what happens to individuals is not of much consequence; but there is danger also to the Commonwealth—(hear, hear)—danger, multiplied tenfold by the circumstances of the hour and by our party strife. Yes, for the first time in history, our foes have sympathisers and supporters within our ancient fortress, and their plan of attack finds encouragement from



those who ought to be the strenuous defenders of the citadel. (Cheers.) This it is which makes our task more arduous; but it makes it also more honourable. (Hear, hear.) We will not shrink from it. (Hear, hear.) We will not bate a jot. We will not yield to threats—(hear, hear)—from whatever quarter they come. And we will endeavour to hand down unimpaired to our children the unity, the strength, and the honour of the kingdom and mighty Empire which our forefathers have bequeathed to us. (Loud and prolonged cheers, amidst which the right hon. gentleman resumed his seat, having spoken an hour and twenty minutes.)

*EDINBURGH, April 15, 1887.*

## IRISH HOME RULE FROM A SCOTTISH STANDPOINT.

[On leaving Ayr, Mr. Chamberlain proceeded to Edinburgh, where he addressed a meeting in the Music Hall, under the auspices of the local branch of the National Radical Union.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, who was received with loud and prolonged cheers and slight hisses, said: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, although this is not by any means the first occasion which I have had to visit the Scottish metropolis, yet I do stand in need of the kind introduction of Lord Stair to a political meeting, since this is the first time on which I have ever addressed a public gathering in Edinburgh. (Cheers.) I thank you very much for the cordial welcome which you have given to me, and I draw from it encouragement and stimulus to maintain the principles which I have already asserted. (Hear, hear.) I am here to-night more particularly to vindicate the position of the National Radical Union, under whose auspices this meeting has been called together, and which has formed an important branch in your city. (Cheers.) The National Radical Union stands, in a certain sense, half-way between the opposing parties. We resist, we always have resisted, and we shall continue to resist, the Home Rule proposals of the late Government, because we see in them a complete surrender to the enemies of England—(cheers)—and because we regard them as a project of veiled separation—(cheers)—which, sooner or later, after a prolonged period of struggle and unrest, would lead to the disruption of the Empire and the loss of its influence. (Hear, hear.) But we are not content to accept a merely negative position, and we have always maintained that a case was made out for a considerable reform in the direction of a great extension of local government, and we have said that if our friends—our late leader and those who support him—would only frankly abandon the bill which they say is dead, and which we believe was conclusively and finally

rejected by the country—(cheers)—that then we would join with them to seek and to find a safer and a more practical conclusion. (Hear, hear.)

#### FOUR PROPOSITIONS.

Now, I propose to-night to lay before you, and to defend, as best I may, four separate propositions. I propose, in the first place, to show that the bill of the late Government has not been abandoned—(hear, hear)—and that it still remains the only authorised expression—(hear, hear)—of the policy of the late Prime Minister. (Hear, hear.) I propose, in the second place, to show that that bill affords no hope of a satisfactory and, above all, of a final settlement—(hear, hear)—and that the plan which it proposed is totally inapplicable to the case of Scotland. (Hear, hear.) In the third place, I shall assert that the experience of Scotland, and the needs of Scotland, afford a most valuable indication of the measure and the limits of proposals which might be safely introduced in the direction of a great devolution of authority, without interfering with the supremacy of Parliament or the integrity of the Empire. And, lastly, I shall maintain that it is the action of the Gladstonian Liberals, and of them alone, which is the only obstacle to such a solution as would satisfy Scotland, and England, and Wales and every reasonable Irishman who is not an avowed enemy—(cheers)—of the British connection.

#### THE TWO COERCIONS.

But, before I deal with these four propositions, there is a preliminary question on which I should like to say one or two words. The tactics of the Parnellite party at the present time are, I am sorry to say—and they are not concealed—(hear, hear)—to make government impossible—(hear, hear)—under the ordinary law; and, having forced the hands of the Executive—having compelled them to come to Parliament to ask for a strengthening of the law—they now seek, under cover of the unpopularity which attaches to anything which can be described as coercion, to press upon the people of this country, as a palatable substitute, the bill which the country has already rejected. Already I have spoken at some length in Scotland

upon this subject, and to-night there is only one observation which I should like to add. It is not a question between conciliation and coercion that you have to decide. (Hear, hear.) You have only before you a choice of coercion : coercion by the law, or coercion by the League. (Cheers.) In Ireland at the present time there are two governments, two systems of law and criminal procedure, two codes of crimes and punishments. You have, on the one hand, the Government of the Queen, which is the security for law and order and the protection of the lives and property of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects. You have, on the other hand, the government of the League, subsidised by the money and directed by the counsels of the Convention of Chicago. (Cheers.) You have, on the one hand, the law of the land, under which this country has developed its liberties and secured its great position as the freest nation in the world. (Cheers.) On the other hand, you have the unwritten law, which has never been publicly discussed, and which is so contrived as to lend itself to the objects of private vengeance and of rebellious faction. (Cheers.) And, lastly, you have, on the one hand, the judicial tribunals of the United Kingdom, with their system which has been built up by generations of intelligent and patriotic men, and which is so contrived as to afford protection in all cases to the innocent. (Cheers.) On the other hand, you have the secret tribunals executing their judgments by masked assassins—(hear, hear, and cheers)—and meting out, without appeal, the punishment of fine, and torture, and death. (Cheers.) You have, I say, to choose between these alternative systems. You will either have to suppress this illegal combination, or this combination will suppress your Government—(hear, hear)—and, for myself, I say that, though I hate the necessity for anything in the nature of repressive legislation, yet I am prepared to use force, if necessary—all the force that may be required—(loud cheers)—in order to preserve liberty, and at all hazards and in all circumstances to maintain the supremacy of the law against the law-breakers. (Cheers.) At the same time, I am not less anxious to amend the law, wherever it can be shown to be defective ; and if the Opposition were prepared to put forward any plan of settlement which would not be prejudicial to the interests of Great Britain, and which would be satisfactory to the people of Ireland, I should say that we should all be glad enough to give it a

favourable consideration. (Hear, hear.) If we could rely upon any such proposal to bring back peace to Ireland, to restore the authority of the ordinary law, to end the tyranny of the League, we should gladly accept it as a substitute for any form of coercion. (Cheers.)

#### MR. GLADSTONE'S HOME RULE.

But there is no such plan. (Hear, hear.) We cannot get from either the late Prime Minister or from any of his supporters any indication whatever of any plan of the kind—(hear, hear)—any security or any assurance that, if to-morrow this Government were turned out of office, the Government which succeeded it would not immediately revert to the bill which they declared to be dead, but which, unfortunately, is still the only expression of their policy. (Hear, hear.) I think it is rather an ominous sign that I have noticed in connection with the very artificial agitation which is now going on in the country against coercion—(cheers and hisses)—I call it a very artificial agitation. (Hisses and cheers.) I know something about agitation—(laughter)—I have been connected with a good many—(renewed laughter)—and I never in my life have witnessed anything so hollow—(laughter and cheers)—so absurdly hollow and mechanical, as the agitation which is now going on. (Cheers.) The *Daily News*, as the organ of the Separatist party, fills its columns day after day with accounts of meetings which it is pleased to describe as the opinion of the country—(laughter)—but if you look into these accounts you will see that, with very few exceptions, they are accounts of hole-and-corner meetings of committees, and of clubs and of councils and of associations which have very little representative value indeed—(cheers)—and which meet to pass resolutions which are sent down to them in a stereotyped form—(hear, hear)—from a central organisation. But that makes all the more noteworthy the point to which I want to call your attention. And it is that these resolutions, not content with denouncing coercion, not content with asserting with a singular forgetfulness of the history of the last two or three years that this bill is the most stringent bill which has ever been introduced into Parliament, go on to demand a settlement of the Irish question on the lines of the Home Rule Bill. (Hear, hear.) We have Mr. Gladstone's Bill now

brought up again by the wirepullers as the only and the necessary substitute for the policy of the Government.

### TWO MAIN OBJECTIONS.

Under these circumstances, it is desirable that I should once more, as briefly as I can, point out to you the main objections which we entertain to that bill. I will refer only to two. We objected to that bill in the first place because, although it professed to recognise the nationality of Ireland, it did not give to the Irish Parliament which it established any of the characteristic authority of a nation, but it made of Ireland a subject province. (Hear, hear.) Under these circumstances we asserted that the bill could not be accepted as a final settlement by any Irishman, and that although it did not enact separation, yet that it paved the way for it and made it inevitable. (Cheers.) The bill was the power to obtain separation. (Hear, hear.) What would any Scotsman say if such a bill were proposed as a satisfaction to the Scottish demand for Home Rule? What would any Scotsman say if it were proposed that from Scotland should be taken all control and influence over the foreign and colonial policy of this country—(cheers)—if it should have no voice whatever in the management of its own taxation, if it should be deprived of all control over trade and navigation, and if, in a score of other different ways, it were “cribbed, cabined, and confined,” and at the same time these matters were dealt with on its behalf by a Parliament in Westminster to which Scotland did not send one single representative? (Cheers.) Is Scotland willing to renounce all share in the Government of our great Indian dependency—(“No”)—to the building up of which Scotland’s sons have contributed so greatly? (Cheers.) Would Scotland resign her share in the administration of the army—(“No”)—in the long list of whose heroic deeds the names of Scotsmen occur so frequently? No, gentlemen, the idea has only to be stated, only to be understood, to be scouted. And why do you suppose that the patriotic Irishmen would accept what you patriotic Scotsmen would scornfully reject? (Cheers.) The bill would have been treated as an instalment only of the just demands of Ireland. It would have enabled the Irish Nationalist party to use it as a lever in order to attain the complete independence of their country, which

we know to be their ultimate demand. I am going to show that this was their object by a quotation to which I think it worth while to call your attention.

#### THE OBJECT OF THE PARNELLITES.

The other night in Ayr I referred to a speech which was made by Mr. Redmond at the Convention of Chicago—(hear, hear)—and I observe that Mr. Redmond has complained in the House of Commons that I did not quote him correctly—(a laugh)—and that I misapprehended his meaning. Well, I took my quotation from a verbatim report of his speech which appeared in all the leading English newspapers; and I do not think that the slight correction which he has offered materially or substantially changes the meaning in any respect. (Hear, hear.) But Mr. Redmond complains that I did not quote the whole of his speech—(laughter)—which, I confess, I think is a little unreasonable. (Renewed laughter.) I quoted his statement to his friends in America, that the principle for which the Irish Parnellite party was contending was the principle which Rowe O'Neil vindicated on the banks of the Blackwater, and for which Emmet and Wolff Tone lost their lives—the principle of rebellion to the rule of the stranger; and I said that it was perfectly evident that that principle was not contained in the Home Rule Bill of Mr. Gladstone, and that an Irishman would therefore never have accepted the bill as a final settlement. (Cheers.) But Mr. Redmond says that there was another part of his speech in which he said that they found this principle in Mr. Gladstone's bill. (Laughter.) Well, in one sense I daresay they did and so did I. (Laughter and cheers.) And that is why I rejected it. (Cheers.) But what we maintained was, and what Mr. Redmond's speech proves is, that they accepted it only so far as they believed it contained the principle of rebellion against the rule of the stranger for which Wolff Tone lost his life; and if they found that principle was not contained in it, they would never rest until they had obtained their ends by other means. (Cheers.) But the person I am going to quote to-night is not Mr. Redmond, but another member of the Irish party. I am going to quote from a letter which was written on February the 22nd, 1887, by Mr. Frank Byrne. Mr. Frank Byrne has had a

curious history. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) He was the secretary of the Irish Parliamentary party—"the constitutional party"—(laughter)—and he must have been deep in the secrets of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues. But some relative of Mr. Byrne—some people say it was his wife and other people say it was his wife's sister—was concerned indirectly in the proceedings which preceded the assassinations in the Phoenix Park. She was "the brave little woman" who was received and fêted, when she went to America, by Patrick Ford and the other dynamite conspirators, and who was described as a heroine who had deserved the thanks of every Irishman. What do you think was her heroic deed? She carried from London to Dublin the knives wherewith the assassinations were perpetrated. (Sensation.) Well, Mr. Byrne, after the discovery of the "Invincible" conspiracy found it good for his health to go to America. (Laughter.) And there he is more free in his utterances than he ever was while he was secretary of the Parliamentary party.

#### IRISH AMERICAN OPINION.

This is what he says of the situation which was created by Mr. Gladstone's bill. "Home Rule," he says. "Yes, Mr. Gladstone did introduce a measure which was to give a miserable farce under that name to Ireland. Home Rule without the control of the military; Home Rule without the control of the police; Home Rule without the control of the Customs; Home Rule without any powers of self-government whatever. And even for this abortion the Irish people, or a section of them, would have been thankful. And what was the result? The English working man, the friend of Ireland, defeated Mr. Gladstone at the hustings. . . . No sentimental bosh should be allowed to tie our hands. The torch, the knife, and dynamite are weapons which are at the disposal even of an unarmed and poverty-stricken nation like ours. England has taken good care to deprive us of all other weapons, and in God's name let us 'use those we have at once, without hesitation and without mercy'." (Shame.) That blasphemous statement contains the policy of the men upon whose money, upon whose support, the movement in Ireland at the present time chiefly depends. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) And yet there are people in this country at this time who



are fatuous enough to suppose that you can conciliate foes like that with a bill which Mr. Byrne describes as a miserable farce and an abortion. (Hear, hear.)

### THE BETRAYAL OF ULSTER.

Well, gentlemen, the second point of objection to the bill was that it afforded no adequate protection to minorities. I know there was an attempt in connection with the Land Bill, which has now been finally abandoned, to save one class in the community from the consequence which would have ensued from placing the government of the country in the hands of the National League. The landlords were the only class to whom consideration was shown. There was no protection whatever for the great province of Ulster; there was no consideration for the scattered minorities in other parts of Ireland in the southern provinces, whose lives and properties would have been at the mercy of men from whom, up to the present time, they have received but scant courtesy and consideration. And there was no protection for the official class throughout the country—for judges, for the magistrates, for the police, for the ministers of the law, for all who had made themselves obnoxious to the League, and who now are threatened by Mr. Dillon and other members of Parliament with vengeance if ever the League should be placed in the seat of power. (Hear, hear.) I know we are told that majorities ought to rule. That is a very good maxim. (Cheers.) I am prepared to accept it—(hear, hear)—although I should like to add to it the fact that the greatest, the most glorious work of the Liberal party in the past has been the protection of minorities—(cheers)—has been the defence of the weak against the strong—(cheers)—and of the poor against the rich. (Hear, hear.) But let that pass. Let majorities rule. But what majority? (Hear, hear.) Is it the majority of this United Kingdom? (Cheers.) Then they have pronounced judgment—(hear, hear)—with no hesitating voice, and why cannot the minority accept their decision—(hear, hear)—if not with satisfaction, at least with decent resignation. (Cheers and laughter.) But if you mean by majorities ruling that the majority in each district should be considered where a district has any distinctive characteristic, then I should like to know upon what ground you are to allow the majority

of three millions in the southern provinces to rule, and to pay no attention to the one million and a half in the northern provinces. You have and you always have had two nations in Ireland. You have the nation of the north, chiefly Protestant, always loyal—(cheers)—you have the nation in the south, chiefly Catholic, always discontented. Why should the one be treated worse than the other? Now, I cannot think—it seems to me impossible—that Ulster should appeal to the sympathy and support of Scotsmen and fail in its appeal. (Hear, hear.) These Ulster men are to a large extent of Scottish blood and extraction. (Hear, hear.) They were planted there in days long gone by; they have remained there on the faith of the British Parliament. They are bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh. They share the common religion which they have inherited from your and from their forefathers. (Hear, hear.) They have shown themselves worthy of their stock by the dour perseverance and the patient industry which has created a great commerce in Ireland, and which has made of Ulster the most prosperous and flourishing province in the country. (Cheers.) And if you desert them, I cannot help thinking that the race must have degenerated since the days when it was a Scottish maxim that blood ran thicker than water. (Cheers.) But even if they were left alone, even if they were left unassisted, I am convinced that they would show themselves able to maintain their liberties against an odious domination. (Cheers.) On this point I should like to quote an authority who ought to be listened to with great respect by our Gladstonian friends. We all think well of Mr. John Morley—(cheers)—because we know him to be honest; and honesty is rather a rare political virtue just now. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) But I cannot say that even Mr. Morley has always been consistent. (A voice, "Have you?") Yes, I hope so. He has changed his opinions somewhat upon the great question which we are considering. In 1882 he wrote an article in the *Nineteenth Century*, from which the following is an extract. He was discussing the question of Home Rule, and he said, "What again is to be said of the chances of the peace being kept between the Protestant minority and the Catholic majority. . . . Few political dangers are ever so great as they seem, and it might well be that none of this confusion might follow. An Irish Legislature on the colonial model would probably work better than many expect. But the risk is

visible. English statesmen will naturally think twice, nay, thrice before they will run the risk of inviting a reduced and squalid version of the Thirty Years' War." Well, I appeal from Mr. John Morley, the leader of a party diminished and disorganised by this fatal policy. I appeal from him to Mr. John Morley, the calm and impartial philosophic writer, and I invite him as one who has loved his country well, and who has done much to uphold its influence and its authority, not to land us in "a reduced and squalid version of the Thirty Years' War". (Cheers.)

#### A HINT FROM SCOTLAND.

Well, sir, I pass to my third proposition, that the experience of Scotland should give us very valuable suggestions as to the extent to which we can safely comply with the demand for an extension of local government. Now, what do Scotsmen want in the matter of Home Rule? There is one thing I will venture to say they do not want—they do not want to be cut adrift from the great Empire of which they form so important a part. (Cheers.) They do not want to lose all share in the Imperial Parliament, to whose debates their sons have lent so much lustre. Now, on the other hand, I suppose that Scotsmen may desire that there should be greater expedition in the prosecution of Scotch business. (Hear, hear.) And probably, also, they would desire that a greater local knowledge should be applied to its discussion. I confess that it seems to me that both these objects are not only desirable in themselves, but that they may be easily attainable without in the slightest degree affecting the integrity of the Empire, the supremacy of Parliament, or endangering the rights of minorities. (Hear, hear.) I do not believe that Scotsmen have at the present time much to fear from English prejudice in the House of Commons. (Hear, hear.) I believe that in a reformed Parliament, at any rate, if it were perfectly clear that the mind of Scotland was made up on any great question—say, for instance, upon such a disputed question as the disestablishment of the Church—(cheers)—I believe that in that case English members would lay aside their prejudices and prepossessions, if they had any. (A voice, "Never".) Well, I think experience shows that they would do so, and I am convinced that their readiness to do so would be still more marked in the

future than it has been in the past, and they would say—"This is a matter which chiefly concerns Scotsmen; let Scotsmen settle it for themselves". (Hear, hear, and cheers.) That, it appears to me, is not the difficulty which you have to fear. The difficulty is that, owing to the tremendous pressure of Imperial business, Scottish business gets crowded out, and cannot be brought up for discussion or settlement at all; and not only so, but as you have to consider in the election of your members to the Imperial Parliament Imperial questions and party questions, you select them rather upon these grounds than upon grounds of their special local knowledge, or of their opinions upon merely local questions; and if it were arranged that certain branches of local business should be referred to local assemblies, then you might elect representatives to them who would certainly be better qualified to deal with these local questions than the members of an Imperial Parliament. (Hear, hear.) In such a case as this there would be no interference whatever with the prerogative or the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. The administration of the law, the appointment of the Judges, the Criminal Law would remain where it is at present; and Parliament, the Imperial Parliament of the United Kingdom, would be responsible primarily, as it is now, for law and order throughout the length and breadth of the land. (Cheers.) But Parliament—and in my opinion it would be a wise proceeding—might delegate to a local assembly, or to more than one, if there were such a distinction of interests as would justify a division of that kind—it might delegate to local national or provincial assemblies such questions as education, public works, local government, and private bill legislation; and these matters being taken out of Parliament would relieve the pressure and enable members to do their work much better, and at the same time they would create and develop a local enterprise and a local patriotism which, I believe, would do much for the welfare and prosperity of the whole country. (Cheers.)

#### THE UNIONIST POLICY.

You would have, according to a plan of this kind, an ascending scale of local institutions. You would have, in the first place, the village Council dealing with the petty interests of a very limited area;

you would have above that the great municipalities and the county boards with a much larger authority and powers, and of course with a much extended area ; then you would have the provincial assemblies with strictly defined powers of legislation ; above all, you would have the Imperial Parliament, with supreme and concurrent authority, which it could use if there were any attempt to abuse their powers by any of the subordinate bodies. Now I say, gentlemen, that such a plan as that would give all that any reasonable man can ask for in the direction of local independence. To go further is separation. (Loud cheers.) The four nationalities of which the United Kingdom is composed—if there are four nationalities, because I believe my friend Sir John Lubbock has some doubts on the subject—but what are ordinarily known as the four nationalities of the United Kingdom go together to make up the aggregate of the nation ; they are not nations themselves. They are nationalities but not nations—(hear, hear)—and if you recognise them as nations you must go to the extent of granting to them the control of the military administration, the control of the foreign policy, and the whole control of domestic policy, for these are the necessary attributes and characteristics of every distinct and separate national existence. (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, I have fulfilled, so far, the task which I have undertaken. I have endeavoured to make clear to you the nature of the differences which divide those whom I must call “Separatist Home Rulers”. (Hisses and cheers.) I am very glad to hear those hisses. I am glad that this demonstration shows that the Gladstonian Liberals do not like the name. (Laughter, cheers, and hisses.) I hope they do not like the thing. (Laughter and cheers.) But I have pointed out to you the differences which separate them from those who, like myself, may claim to be Unionist Home Rulers. (Cheers.) Now, it is these differences, neither more nor less, which at the present time are sapping the strength of the Liberal party and destroying its influence. (“Oh.”) What? Do you doubt it? Do you doubt that the Liberal party is weakened by the differences which exist? (“No.”) What was the result of the last election? (Cheers.) What will be the result of the next if these differences are not healed? (Cheers.) The last election was a defeat for the Liberal party ; the next will be a catastrophe. (Cheers.) But, gentlemen, is it not possible that these differences may be healed? (Hear, hear.) Is

there no hope that the rift, which threatens to become a chasm, may yet be bridged over?

### AN ILL-OMENED ALLIANCE.

The one obstacle to such a desirable consummation is the ill-omened alliance between the leader of the Liberal party—(cheers)—and the men whom, a few years ago he described, and correctly described as “marching through rapine” to the disintegration of the Empire. Have they repented since then? (“No, no.”) Have they repudiated their policy? (“No.”) Can the leopard change its spots? (Cheers.) As long as they depend for their money on the Byrnes and the Fords of America, so long with them we can have no parley, and we can have no compromise. (Loud cheers.) Yet, gentlemen, it is these men, the apostles of dynamite and preachers of assassination—(cheers and hisses)—it is these men who are to decide the fate of the Liberal party. We have appealed to Mr. Gladstone again and again, and we have asked him to end these differences. Four times at least in the course of this controversy, he has had the opportunity of saying the word which would have bid our divisions cease. And he has found himself unable to meet our advances. He has found himself unable to give us any assurance that he would accept any considerable modification in the policy of the bill to which we have taken exception, and we are forced to the conclusion that he prefers the alliance of the Parnellite party, to the opportunity of reunion with his former colleagues and followers. (Cheers.) Under these circumstances we have no alternative. We shall fight the quarrel out. (Loud cheers.) And so far as the Union is concerned I have no doubt and no hesitation that it will be maintained by the good sense and intelligence of the people of this country. (Cheers.) But I cannot but deeply regret that the Liberal party should be wrecked and shattered in the effort to preserve this Union. (Cheers.) The Liberal party is not the work of one man. (Cheers.) It is not the property of any individual. (Renewed cheers.) Many hands have gone to the building of it, and those who have sacrificed the best years of their lives in promoting its interests may well protest when they see it now threatened with destruction. Two years ago, Mr. Gladstone, the leader of the Liberal party, used his powerful influence

in order to exclude from the Liberal programme the question of the disestablishment of the Church, which some of us had deeply at heart—(hear, hear)—because he said that that question had not been sufficiently discussed in the country, and because he said that it would divide our ranks, and therefore he urged, and he urged successfully, that it should be postponed in order that a united Liberal party might proceed with the reforms upon which we were all agreed. (Loud cheers.) Yes, cheer that if you like. (Cheers.) That was a wise and a statesmanlike policy, becoming the leader of a great party. (Cheers.) But how comes it then that now, twelve months later the self same man, without any preliminary discussion in the country—(cheers)—without full or fair consultation with his party or his followers, should have flung this apple of discord amongst us, and should have insisted upon thrusting down our throats a reversal of all the traditions of the Liberal party? (Loud cheers.) I have read of mighty magicians in past ages, who have wielded more than mortal power over the forces of Nature, and who at the close of a long struggle with adverse influences have broken in twain the wand with which they exercised their will, in order that no profane hand might touch it afterwards. I say that it would be a sad, almost a tragic conclusion, if the last public act of the greatest orator and statesman that the Liberal party—(cheers)—has ever produced should be the destruction of the instrument, which has on so many occasions yielded loyally to his touch, and which has manifested his power and his influence to the world. (Loud cheers.)

*LIBERAL UNION CLUB, June 14th, 1887.*

A SECT WITHOUT A CREED.

[On Tuesday, June 14th, 1887, Mr. Chamberlain was entertained at dinner by the Liberal Union Club at Willis's Rooms. The company numbered about 300, and the Hon. Arthur Elliot, M.P., presided.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, on rising, was very cordially received. He said—Mr. Elliot, my Lords and Gentlemen—I thank you, Sir, for the kind, although much too flattering terms in which you have been pleased to introduce me to this assembly; and I thank you, my lords and gentlemen, for the cordial reception which you have given to me. I do not presume to accept the honour which you have done me as merely a personal compliment. I regard it rather as a demonstration of your fidelity to our common cause, and I am encouraged by the assurance which this great and representative gathering affords me, that the advocates of progress—of orderly progress and of constitutional reform, the party of the Union, in fact—will be able to make way against the Separatist faction, which at one time threatened to usurp the honoured name and the functions of the Liberal party. (Cheers.) Sir, I will venture to extend an observation which you made just now, and I would say that the action, not of the Radical section, but of the Unionist Liberals as a whole, has saved the Liberal party from the disgrace of a surrender which would have imperilled the best interests of our country. (Cheers.) We have secured time for discussion and reflection—(hear, hear)—and the delay has done much to open the eyes of the British people to the true objects and methods of the conspirators, who seek the unmaking of England, and who have striven to extort from the fears of our statesmen concessions that they never could have obtained by an appeal to their reason. (Cheers.)



## THE GAME OF DISORDER.

I rejoice to say that I think the signs of the times are favourable—(cheers)—and if I might venture to parody an expression which has had a certain celebrity, I would tell you that the game of lawlessness and disorder is up at last. (Loud cheers.) We see the proof of this in the daily increasing violence of the men whom Mr. Gladstone has accepted as his allies, and whom he presents to us—in all sincerity, no doubt—as converts to constitutional and Parliamentary methods, but who, in view of the lamentable failure of their agitation, are flinging to the winds all pretence of moderation, and are hoisting their true colours as irreconcilable foes of the British people and the British connexion. We see it also in the strained relations which have become apparent between the Gladstonian Liberals and their Irish auxiliaries, and which have been produced, not before it was time, by the persistent continuance of obstructive tactics. I, for my part, think that the Government exercised a very wise discretion in giving full rope to the Opposition, and in allowing them to carry to the utmost lengths a policy which unfortunately has had the sanction of some of the Liberal leaders. But at last they have filled up the measure; at last, they have aroused the slow but sure indignation of the democracy, who are indignant at the treason which would bring into disrepute the great instrument of democratic authority. (Cheers.) At last, they have brought to the minds of their associates the danger and inexpediency of the course to which they too hastily committed themselves, and accordingly, in these last few days, we have seen the majorities of the Government increasing in each successive division, as one by one the leaders of the Gladstonian section, and all that is respectable in that party—(laughter)—have slipped away behind the Speaker's chair, afraid of sanctioning by their votes the policy to which they have given the support of their speeches. (Cheers.) I think, gentlemen, that it is a matter for sincere congratulation that there are lengths to which Gladstonian Liberals will not be dragged, and that the more fair and the more moderate and the more intelligent among them are becoming tired of marching through Coventry at the heels of Dr. Tanner and Mr. Labouchere. (Laughter.)

I do not say that the danger with which we have recently been

confronted has entirely disappeared, but, at least, it is less imminent than it was. All the reports which I receive from the constituencies confirm the impression which I derived from my recent visit to Scotland—(cheers)—and even more, perhaps, from the result of the St. Austell election. (Cheers.) The confidence which, two years ago, was universally felt by the Liberal party in the judgment and the patriotism of Mr. Gladstone, has been rudely shaken, and now men are everywhere examining his policy on its merits. (Hear, hear.) In the light of that examination, the issues which divide us are every day becoming more clear and more definite. We have, I believe, only to maintain our organisation, and to continue to assert our principles and victory—victory complete and final—awaits our efforts—(cheers)—while our opponents will have to find what compensation they may for the loss of the support of the British constituencies in the sympathy of that portion of the civilised world which is controlled by the Irish vote, or which anticipates, with ill-disguised satisfaction, the ruin or the dishonour of England. (Cheers.)

#### PROSPECTS OF REUNION.

I confess that I am not surprised under these circumstances—circumstances which must necessarily be so disturbing to those who a short time ago imagined that they had found an easy road to salvation—(laughter)—I am not surprised, I say, that renewed efforts should have been made to reunite the Liberal party under Mr. Gladstone's leadership, nor that on the present occasion these advances should have come from Mr. Gladstone himself. I feel a certain delicacy in alluding to this matter, because it must be evident that in the recent speeches which Mr. Gladstone has made he has directly and exclusively addressed himself to Lord Hartington, and it might be retorted upon me that I had no concern in the matter. (Laughter.) I can assure you, however, that I am very glad to be relieved from all responsibility for further negotiation. (Hear, hear.) I have no doubt that Lord Hartington—(cheers)—will take the earliest convenient opportunity to express his views on the present situation, and I have such absolute confidence in him in relation to this matter, in his consistency and in his fairness, that I am quite sure he is not likely to compromise our principles, and I believe it

is absolutely safe to say that if he sees his way to any agreement we shall have no difficulty in following him. (Cheers.)

But, for my own part, I must admit that I am no longer sanguine of the possibility of reconciliation, and I cannot see in the more recent utterances of Mr. Gladstone any indication that a common ground of agreement has been found. One thing, however, has been made clear by those speeches, and it must be eminently satisfactory to every Liberal Unionist. The Irish policy which was elaborately expressed in the two great Bills of the late Government, and for opposing which we have been subjected to every obloquy, and reviled as apostates and renegades, has been finally abandoned by its authors. (Cheers.) At last, we have knocked the bottom out of the proposals which were presented to us two years ago as a final, a full, and a satisfactory settlement of the Irish question. What better justification can we have for our action than the confession of those whom we opposed that the policy to which we objected was insufficiently considered, was incomplete, and required amendment in every important detail? (Cheers.) Of the two great Bills of the late Government, the Land Bill was the first to depart, unwept, unhonoured, and unsung. (Laughter.) The Land Bill has gone; not merely the details of the measure, but the principle also has now absolutely departed—the obligations of honour, the responsibilities of the British people, the atonement for past misdeeds, which could only be made at the expense of the British taxpayer, all these have been surrendered without recall. (Cheers.) Mr. Gladstone declared that a Land Bill was a necessary complement to any scheme of Home Rule, and that no such proposal could be carried into effect without invoking the aid of the British taxpayer. We differed with Mr. Gladstone on that important point, and when the Round Table Conference was held, I submitted to that Conference an alternative plan for abolishing dual ownership, and, at the same time, without having recourse to the credit of the British nation. Now, I find, and it is a most gratifying thing to me, that Mr. Gladstone, on two recent occasions, has declared that it is no longer necessary to invoke the credit of the British nation, and that, without this, it is still possible to abolish dual ownership. (Hear, hear.) I think so satisfactory a conversion is a feather in the cap of the Liberal Unionists. But the havoc which our criticism has made in the Home Rule Bill is not one bit less complete. We are

now told that the financial arrangements of the Bill, which were vaunted as a masterpiece of constructive ingenuity, are to be entirely revised. The provisions for the protection of the minority are to be reconsidered, and even the exclusion of the Irish representatives from Westminster—which we were assured was the keynote of the situation, the central feature of the Bill—even that is now declared to be a matter of no importance whatever, and a subject which is to be reserved for future discussion at some indefinite period. But under these circumstances, what remains? When you have made these changes in the Bill, and when you have made the changes which are consequential upon them, if the Bill is not then dead, it is, at least, a dismembered and mutilated trunk. The Bill has been so altered that I doubt whether its parent would know it. The only thing that remains is a principle stated so vaguely that it is open to inconsistent interpretation, and as to which its advocates confess that they have failed in the first attempt to apply it. It seems to me that that is not a hopeful basis for union, or upon which to found a new policy which is not revealed to us, and which is not to be disclosed until we have laid down our arms and surrendered all means of effectual opposition ; and as a basis for re-union, it becomes impossible when it is coupled with the condition that this new policy, like the old one, is to be made acceptable to the men who have already done their best to make the government of Ireland impossible, and whose object is now, as it always has been, the entire and absolute independence of their country. I say it is not upon such terms as these that an honourable peace can be negotiated. For my part, if re-union with the majority involves the acceptance of the Parnellite yoke, I would prefer to keep my neck free. (Cheers.) I refuse to accept a servitude which has every day become more galling and intolerable to those who have so hastily accepted it.

#### THE GLADSTONIAN FAITH.

But although I do not think that there is any immediate possibility of a formal agreement, and although I do not think that reunion is desirable with the Irish allies of the Gladstonian party or with the extreme section of that party which is now making a burlesque of politics—(cheers)—yet I do not on that ground abandon the hope

that the bulk of the Gladstonian Liberals will before long return to the fold. (Cheers and laughter.) A moment's consideration will show that their position cannot be a happy one. (Laughter.) They are engaged in founding a church, but it has no elements of permanence whatever. I think, Sir, you said that I was to be applauded for having refused my adherence to a new creed. My contention is that this is a sect without a creed. (Cheers.) They have a religion with no articles; they have a faith, but I defy them to say what their doctrine is. (Cheers.) They profess to be the only orthodox representatives, by apostolic succession, of the Liberal party, and in the course of a brief time they have passed through almost every phase of political heresy. (Cheers.) In the short space of a few years they have been called upon to oppose coercion and to support it. They have been required to denounce boycotting as public plunder and to defend it as the only perfect means of redress for an oppressed nationality. They have denounced the immorality of refusing to pay rent, and they have been silent when the Plan of Campaign has been proposed. (Cheers.) A short time ago they repudiated Home Rule as tending to the dismemberment of the Empire, and now they are required to believe that it is the only sure and certain guarantee of a perfect Union. And lastly, they have been taught to denounce obstruction as the greatest of Parliamentary offences, and then to sit silent while it was advocated as a sacred duty of a constitutional Opposition. (Loud cheers.) If that is their past experience, what have they to hope for in the future? (Hear, hear.) The Home Rule Bill to which they were committed has disappeared—has been abandoned. As I have shown you, all its main features are no longer in existence. Is there one of them who would dare to tell us what the Home Rule Bill of the future is to be? (Hear, hear.) Can they say, for instance, whether the separate treatment of Ulster—a question which lies at the very root of any settlement—is an orthodox tenet or a schismatical heresy—(cheers)—whether the Imperial responsibility for law and order is a dogma necessary to salvation, or whether it is a pious opinion? (Laughter and cheers.) There is nothing that holds them all together except the temporary exceptional influence of a great personality, and therefore I am sanguine that in no dim and distant future, but in the very early present, we shall find our old friends returning once more to the

beaten highways of Liberalism, from which they have temporarily strayed, and which we have kept open and clear for them during their brief aberration. (Cheers.)

### THE WORK OF THE FUTURE.

When that happy time arrives, and we once more find ourselves marching shoulder to shoulder with the majority of our late colleagues and friends, we shall then recognise that the crisis through which we have passed has profoundly modified the relations of English political parties. (Hear, hear.) We who are Liberals and Radicals, and who have not abated one jot or tittle of any of the professions or opinions which we have ever expressed, have found ourselves forced reluctantly into alliance with our political opponents—(hear, hear)—and in consequence we have had to examine their general policy on its merits and without regard to party considerations. I may say that that examination has not been altogether unsatisfactory. But, on the other hand, the Government, relying on our support and co-operation, have been encouraged and stimulated to put forward a programme which marks a great advance upon the previously accepted platform of the Tory party—(hear, hear)—and which is more adapted to the new conditions created by the recent extension of the franchise. (Hear, hear.) I do not suppose that it will be possible altogether to get rid of the old names which have divided political parties throughout generations of strife, but the old names no longer represent the old ideas. (Hear, hear.) The Dartford speech of Lord Randolph Churchill, made at a time when he was a prominent member of the Government, and confirmed by several subsequent speeches of some of his colleagues, sounded the death knell of the old reactionary Tory policy; and I confess that I do not think it is altogether impossible that the great social questions and problems of our time which most urgently demand solution should receive satisfactory settlement at the hands of a national party—(cheers)—which should exclude only the extreme sections of the party of reaction on the one hand, and the party of anarchy on the other. (Cheers.) What is the work that we are called upon to do? What is the mandate of the constituencies which has been laid aside by the unnecessary intervention of another subject? We have to reform the land laws; we have to provide for

a great increase in the number of owners of the soil—(hear, hear)—we have to secure an improvement in the condition of the agricultural labourers—(cheers)—we have to protect the rights of the poor in their charities and endowments and old foundations which were created for their benefit—(hear, hear)—we have to provide for the extension of local government on a popular basis—(hear, hear)—we have to secure the increase of facilities for primary and technical education; we have to revise our taxation so that we may more nearly approach to the ideal, which has always been put forward by Liberal statesmen, of the equality of sacrifice—(hear)—and last, but not least, we have to secure the economical administration of the revenues of the State, so that the results may correspond more nearly to the extent of the expenditure. (Cheers.) These are the duties that are cast upon us. They are conservative in the truest sense, because by fulfilling them we can strengthen our institutions to bear the strain cast upon them; and they are liberal because they involve a generous recognition of the claims of the least fortunate members of the community, and of the duties and obligations which are attendant upon the possession of property—(hear, hear)—and they are consistent with the determination which we all feel to uphold the integrity of the Empire and to maintain the supremacy of Parliament and the authority of the law. (Cheers.)

For these objects let us remain united, let us maintain and extend our organisation. If we are to exercise, as I hope and believe we shall, a beneficial influence upon future legislation and upon the settlement of these great and pressing questions, we must secure our individual position as a separate party in every constituency in the United Kingdom. (Hear, hear.) We do not want to be absorbed in the old Toryism; that is a dying creed. (Hear, hear.) We do not intend to surrender to the new Radicalism, which is the English imitation of Nihilism, whose only dogma is opposition to all government and all authority. (Cheers.) But when we have secured our position, then we shall be ready to ally ourselves with all, whether they call themselves Conservatives—whether they have hitherto called themselves Conservatives, or Liberals, or Radicals—with all who accept our objects—(hear, hear)—and are prepared to carry these objects out by constitutional methods, and, under these circumstances, I believe that we shall have no difficulty

in holding our own against all the forces of obstruction and disorder. (Hear, hear.)

In conclusion, I congratulate you on the success of our past efforts, and upon the prospects of the future. The democracy has only recently been installed in the seat of power, and it has been subjected to a severe ordeal. Mr. Burke has said that "when the people have a feeling they are commonly in the right, but that they sometimes mistake the physician". (Hear, hear.) The instincts of the people throughout these important discussions have been true and just, and if some of them have mistaken the physician it is because they have been led away by feelings which do them honour, by gratitude for past and exemplary services, by sympathy for suffering, and by hatred of oppression. (Hear, hear.) But even these natural and worthy sentiments have not caused the vast majority to give any countenance to a policy which would disregard the obligations of public morality and national honour, and which would break up the splendid fabric of national unity which is the one great and sound guarantee for the lives and liberties of all the subjects of the Queen. (Loud cheers.)



## THE ULSTER CAMPAIGN.

*October, 1887.*

During the month of October, 1887, Mr. Chamberlain, accompanied by Mr. Jesse Collings, M.P., Mr. T. Lea, M.P., Mr. F. W. Maclean, M.P., Mr. Jasper More, M.P., and Mr. T. D. Russell, M.P., visited Ulster and was everywhere received with the greatest enthusiasm. From the many speeches which he made on this occasion the three following are selected as the most important, and as illustrating three different phases of the Irish question.

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*BELFAST, October 11th, 1887.*

### THE IRISH REPRESENTATION.

[On the evening of the 11th, the Ulster Liberal Unionist Committee entertained Mr. Chamberlain at a Banquet in the Ulster Hall, Belfast. The hall was filled in every part with a most influential and representative assemblage. The chair was occupied by Sir E. Porter Cowan who proposed Mr. Chamberlain's health.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN rose to reply amid loud and prolonged cheers, which were continued for several minutes, and said—Sir Edward Cowan, ladies, and gentlemen, I can assure you that I am deeply touched by the kindness and cordiality of your welcome. I desire to take this the first public opportunity of saying how much I feel the cordiality with which the people of Ulster have received me on the present occasion. It has sometimes been said that there is no such thing as political gratitude. I certainly am not inclined to make that complaint; on the contrary, I only marvel at the generous recognition which is always accorded to every public man who sincerely and honestly attempts to serve his country. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I do not think there can be any mistake as to the nature or meaning of this demonstration. (Hear, hear.) I suppose that many of those who greeted me in the streets to-day, possibly even the majority, have

differed from me on previous occasions, and upon many questions of political controversy. I have not changed those opinions one jot. (Cheers.) I am not here to claim applause under false pretences, and I say at once that I shall be very glad when the opportunity again arises, when I may once more do battle for both the authorised and the unauthorised programme. But in the course of the last two or three years a new question has suddenly been sprung upon us, and its magnitude is such that it throws into the shade all the minor subjects upon which in the past we have disputed. (Hear, hear.) The maintenance of the Union—(cheers)—the faith and the honour of Britain, the rights and properties of our loyal fellow-subjects, are now at stake. It is all very well to seek means of reforming what is defective in the government of the country, but it is still more important to have a country to govern. (Cheers.) The commonwealth is now in danger, and in view of that transcendent issue patriotism demands that all our former contentions should be hushed, and that we should stand, every loyal and honest man of us, shoulder to shoulder in order to defend the interests and rights that have been committed to our charge. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I have read in some veracious organs of the Gladstone-Parnellite alliance—(hisses)—that I have come to Ulster in order to revive religious bigotry—(laughter)—to re-kindle the embers of party strife and to renew ancient feuds which are now in a fair way to be forgotten. (Laughter.) I can assure you that those are not the objects which I propose to myself. (Cheers.) I accepted your oft-repeated invitation, and I claim the right—a right enjoyed by every British subject—to speak to you in constitutional and moderate language on a subject in which you are vitally interested—(cheers)—and I confess I think it strange that the very men who clamour loudly against the slightest interference with the monstrous and intolerable licence in which they have themselves indulged should, forsooth, suggest that I should be deprived of even the ordinary liberty of speech, and on an occasion when I am addressing those whose sentiments and opinions accord entirely with my own. (Cheers.) Why, gentlemen, I rejoice to think that one result of the trials through which we are passing will be, at all events in the case of Unionists, to break down the old party barriers—(hear, hear)—to bring us closer together and to induce a spirit of mutual respect and consideration. (Hear, hear.) The formation of the

Unionist party in the House of Commons has already shown that Liberals and Radicals, without giving up one jot of their opinions, can yet show themselves to be duly sensible of their Imperial responsibility. (Hear, hear.) At the same time Conservatives and Tories have cordially joined with us in measures of progressive and beneficent legislation—(cheers)—and although I fear it would be absolutely impossible for any man to bridge over the gulf between Separatist and Unionist, between Loyalist and Parnellite, yet I will at least undertake that on our side we will conduct the discussion without violence and without illegality. (Hear, hear.)

#### THE OBJECTS OF THE VISIT.

Now, I have had two objects in view in making this visit to Ulster, and I will state them frankly and at the outset. In the first place, I have wished for the opportunity of addressing the people of Ulster on the effect upon their interests of the great constitutional change which was proposed in the first instance by the avowed enemies of the United Kingdom, and which has now, unfortunately, been adopted by the leader and the great majority of the Liberal party. It seems to me that the time and the place are favourable for the examination of this point. If we were to take our views of Ireland exclusively from Parnellite sources we should come to the conclusion that it was a country in which hopeless destitution and misery almost universally prevail, and that that unfortunate condition of things was due to foreign rule and frightful misgovernment, and that any attempt to reform this odious tyranny—or even a natural expression of discontent—was sternly repressed and put down by an all-pervading and brutal despotism. But before he accepted absolutely such a picture as that, the impartial observer—if any are still left—(laughter)—would inquire whether Ulster—which has more than a quarter of the area of Ireland and more than one-third of the population—is blessed with a different Government or is subject to other laws than those which have this baneful effect upon the rest of Ireland. (Cheers) And if not, he would perhaps go on to inquire why Ulster is, on the whole, prosperous, contented, and loyal; why she is all this with a soil which is more sterile, and with natural conditions which are certainly not more advantageous than those of the rest of the king-

dom ; how it is that she has become, in a country mainly given over to agricultural pursuits, the seat of gigantic industry, and of a great and successful commerce ; how it is that she rivals in her peaceful enterprise and industry, in her progress, and in her loyalty, the most favoured districts in Her Majesty's dominions. (Cheers.) How is it that Belfast continues to increase and multiply, while Cork and Waterford decline ? (Hear, hear.) Well, I say the impartial observer that I have invented for the nonce would, I think, have to answer these questions—at all events to his own satisfaction—before he was content to exchange the Constitution under which you live and prosper for the dubious advantages of a Dublin Parliament. (Cheers.) Then, I wanted in the second place, and as the second object of my visit, to do something to direct public attention in Great Britain to the claims and position of the minority in Ireland. (Cheers.) Of all the curious developments which have been brought about by the introduction of the Home Rule Bill there is none, to my mind, so surprising—I would even say unnatural—as the neglect, the apathy, and the ignorance which a large portion of the Liberal party in England and Scotland have shown as to the interests, rights, and just and proper claims of their co-religionists and fellow-countrymen in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) Let us just look at the simple facts of the case. Ireland has a population of about five millions. Of that number, three millions, or it may be three and a half millions, desire a great experiment, which is strenuously resisted by the remainder. But this minority of one and a half or two millions is not an ordinary minority. It is a minority which includes almost all the cultivated intelligence of the country. (Cheers.) It includes the greater part of its enterprise, a large proportion of its wealth. (Hear, hear.) It embraces, almost to a man, the whole of the Protestant population. It includes everyone of Scotch or English birth and descent. (Hear, hear.) It is connected, therefore, by ties of race and religion and sympathy with the greater nation of which it is proud to form a part. (Cheers.) It is loyal and law-abiding, and it boasts of its share in the history of the United Kingdom, every page of whose annals has been illustrated by the valour and the genius of its citizens. I am not going to pursue the comparison ; it would be invidious to contrast the position and character of the majority. (Laughter and cheers.)

## POLITICAL METEOROLOGY.

But I ask myself how comes it that a minority—so important in its numbers, so influential, and entitled to so much respect for the nature and character of its claims—is actually put aside and treated as of no account in the discussion of proposals by which it is sought to transfer its allegiance to a domination it has good reason to dread and distrust, while the noisy clamour of the majority is suffered to pass as the only true voice of Ireland. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I think I can find one reason which may explain, although I do not say that it justifies, the disproportion in the public estimate between the respective claims of loyalty and sedition. Loyalty in the House of Commons—Irish loyalty—is represented only by seventeen votes, and sedition, on the contrary, enjoys a majority of eighty-six votes. (Laughter and loud cheers.) Even in Ulster, even in the province in which I am speaking, out of thirty-three members the Loyalists can only secure sixteen; a majority of one is counted on the side of the Parnellite or Nationalist party. Now, I think it is possible, under these circumstances, that careless observers may argue from such a predominant majority in the House of Commons that there is only an insignificant minority in the country, and, as that is a matter of very great importance, I have been following an illustrious example, and I have been pursuing some studies in the science of political meteorology. (Laughter and cheers.) I have been investigating the returns at elections, and certainly I have come to some conclusions which go far to modify the result of a cursory inspection of the returns. I find, in the first place, that in Ulster in 1886 twenty-six seats were contested, with the result that thirteen Parnellites and thirteen Loyalists were returned, but that the votes given for the thirteen Parnellites were 73,000, while the votes given for the thirteen Unionists were 89,000—(cheers)—so that with a majority of Unionists of 20 per cent. there was actually a tie in the result of the election. Well then, I find that the total electorate of Ulster averages 8084 electors for each of its thirty-three seats; but the electorate for the rest of Ireland averages only 6987. In other words, seven Nationalists in the South of Ireland are counted as good as eight Loyalists in the Province of Ulster. Well, let us go a step further than this. If Ulster were treated as the rest of Ireland is, and if it returned its members in proportion to

the opinions and numbers of the voters, then Ulster would have thirty-eight members, of whom twenty-one would be Loyalists and seventeen Parnellites, instead of the present arrangement, in which, with the majority of Loyalist votes, there is a minority of Loyalist members. I really think that this is a matter which requires a little explanation and attention. It appears to me that there might even be a suspicion of jerrymandering in these figures—(laughter)—and that at all events the loyal people of Ireland ought not to rest until there has been such a revision of the distribution of political power as would at all events give them their fair share and their fair proportion of the representation in Parliament. (Hear, hear.) Now, turning to the whole of Ireland, I find in 1885 seventy seats were contested by Parnellites and Loyalists. I leave out of account a certain number of seats which were contested between Liberals and Conservatives, and one seat contested by two Parnellites; but, taking the seventy seats in which there was a square fight between Unionists and Parnellites, I find that the votes given were 293,000 Parnellites and 80,000 Unionists, or about three and a half to one, but the numbers returned were sixty-five to five, or thirteen to one. Then, in 1886, thirty-two seats were contested. The votes were 96,000 for the Parnellites and 98,000 for the Loyalists, or a slight majority for the Loyalists. And yet for these same seats the return shows nineteen Parnellites and thirteen Loyalists. A majority of six of the seats went to the Parnellites, though the Unionists had a majority of 2000 in the votes. Lastly, in 1885, the number of Parnellite votes polled was only half the number of the electors on the register in the constituencies contested, and yet the party which only commands half the votes on the register is able to return five-sixths of the members to Parliament. (Hear, hear.) I think you will agree with me that very considerable importance is to be attached to these figures. You will remember that Mr. Gladstone has himself told us again and again that he was led to give up the whole programme on which he had fought the election of 1885, and to undertake this vexed question of Home Rule by the fact that eighty-six Parnellite members, in favour of Home Rule, were returned to the Parliament of 1886. (Hear, hear.) If that party had only had its proper proportion of members it would have had sixty, or at the most sixty-five; and in that case it is highly probable, according to his own statement, that

Mr. Gladstone would not have destroyed the Liberal party and endangered the union between England and Ireland. (Loud cheers.)

#### MAJORITIES MUST RULE.

Well, gentlemen, I know that Mr. Gladstone says you must not go behind the ballot-box, and that the representation in Parliament must be taken to be the exact and proper expression of the opinions of the people. But I do not find that this principle has prevented Mr. Gladstone from questioning pretty sharply the mandate of the majority just at present opposed to him in the House of Commons. (Cheers and laughter.) And therefore I feel justified in asking that the votes of the Irish members shall be weighed as well as counted ; and in any case, I call public attention to the fact that such a minority as that to which I have referred, however it may be represented in Parliament, should on no account be neglected in the settlement of the question in which it has such a vital interest. (Cheers.) I shall be told to-morrow that these calculations are altogether unimportant, because they leave untouched the undoubted fact that at present there is a majority in Ireland in favour of Home Rule, and it is said that according to the old Liberal principle majorities must rule, whether large or small majorities. If that referred only to matters of ordinary legislation I should be very glad to adopt and accept it. But I cannot help thinking that our opponents push their arguments too far. You will remember that in the American Constitution, which has recently been the object of the most unqualified eulogy by Mr. Gladstone, although all subjects of ordinary legislation are left to be decided by the bare majority, the Constitution itself is treated as a solemn compact. (Cheers.) It is a treaty, and a treaty which cannot be altered even in the slightest particular without what is practically the general assent of all concerned. I claim, then, for the minority in Ireland that at least it shall have a veto upon any settlement which may be proposed in this matter affecting its dearest interests and all which it sedulously and jealously guards. In any case, I am convinced that Ulster will have an important part in the future discussion of the subject. (Cheers.) It cannot be put aside ; and if, as I fear, it is likely we shall be called upon once more to resist proposals for the disintegration of the empire,

it is Ulster that will hold the key of the position. (Loud and prolonged cheering.) The responsibility is great, the obligation is onerous, but the honour also is singular and marked. It will not be for the first time in her history that Ulster has played this distinguished part. Once before, 200 years ago, in a corner of Ulster, and behind the walls of Derry—(loud cheers)—a few brave and resolute men rolled back the tide, and saved Ireland from a thralldom worse than any foreign tyranny. Their heroism lives still in your hearts ; and, if once more the issue which they decided for a time, must be faced and settled, I believe the men of Ulster will shrink from no necessary sacrifice—(cheers)—will make every effort to preserve and maintain the privileges and rights which their ancestors won for them. (Loud and vociferous cheering, amidst which Mr. Chamberlain resumed his seat.)



*BELFAST, October 12th, 1887.*

## THE ULSTER QUESTION.

[On October 12th, Mr. Chamberlain addressed a mass meeting in the Ulster Hall. The hall was crowded, and an overflow meeting had to be held to relieve the pressure at the doors.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, who received a most enthusiastic welcome, being cheered over and over again, said—Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I cannot find words to tell you how much I feel the warmth and cordiality of your welcome, and how deeply I am touched by the kindness of my reception in this your great town of Belfast. I rejoice to have been at last permitted to pay a visit to this Northern province. I am glad to meet face to face the loyal men of Ulster—(cheers)—and to gain encouragement from the assurance of your unflinching adhesion to the principles which have hitherto kept the Empire together. I have already, in the course of my short visit to Ulster, gathered much food for suggestive reflection. I find myself in a country which I am daily told is groaning under a brutal and all-pervading tyranny. (Laughter.) And yet I am surrounded by men who are as devoted to the British connection as the people of Glasgow or of Birmingham. (Loud and prolonged cheers.) Here in Belfast I meet with every sign of prosperity and progress. Without any special natural advantages, your port, your docks, your factories, and your public buildings bear witness to the public spirit which has animated your citizens, which has created your trade, and which has adorned your streets. (Cheers.) Everywhere there are signs of prosperity, of active progress, and of enterprise. To-morrow I hope to see something more of the agricultural districts of Ulster. Unless I am altogether misinformed, I shall find everywhere the same characteristics and similar, if perhaps less striking, results. At a time when great agricultural depression exists—when the farmers of Great Britain are vainly striving to meet their obligations, and when

a great deal of the best land in England is lying fallow because it will not pay to work it—I find by the statistics that in Ulster there is yearly taken an increasing quantity of land for cultivation. If I had time to go further, if I were able to go west, for instance to Donegal, I know I should find a different state of things. I know that there, on the wild western coast of this island, I should find people struggling against unfavourable natural conditions like their fellow-subjects, the poor crofters of the Western Islands and Highlands of Scotland. The condition of these poor people is a matter for sympathy and for active help. I believe it is not beyond the reach of statesmanship to do something to better the conditions of their lives, and I hope before I leave Ireland to indicate the direction in which such an improvement may be sought for. But I only refer to this now in order that I may complete my survey, and I may say that, speaking generally, throughout Ulster we find that, except where nature herself seems to interpose barriers to progress, there are everywhere signs of prosperity, of industry, of loyalty, which leave nothing to be desired, and which contrast favourably with other portions of her Majesty's dominions. (Cheers.) But, gentlemen, these results have been accomplished under the same general conditions, under the same laws, under the same Government which are said to press so hardly upon the prosperity of the rest of Ireland. (A laugh.) I am not here to tell you that our Government and our laws are perfect and that they cannot be amended. On the contrary, I am here to say that you have now a Parliament representative of every class, of every interest in the three kingdoms, better able and more willing than any Parliament before it to deal with all reasonable claims, and to relieve all proved defects. But I say that these defects, whatever they may be, do not account for the difference between the state of affairs in the North and South of Ireland. (Cheers.)

#### TWO IRELANDS.

If you want an explanation you must go further, and then you will find that there are two Irelands. (Cheers.) There is an Ireland which is prosperous and loyal and contented. (Renewed cheering.) There is an Ireland which is miserable and dissatisfied, and continually under the control and leadership of agitators—(hear, hear)—who profit

by the disturbance that they create. (Cheers.) There are two races in Ireland, and when it is proposed to put a race which has shown all the qualities of a dominant people, which has proved, in the history of the world, that it can justify the ascendancy that it has secured—when it is proposed to put that race under the other, which, whatever its merits may be, has always failed in the qualities which compel success—(cheers)—I say that that is an attempt against nature—(loud cheers)—an attempt which all history and all experience show must of necessity fail, and can only lead to disaster and confusion. (Cheers.) I am not in favour of submitting Ulster to a Dublin Parliament. (Loud and prolonged cheers.) It is not because I believe that even under these circumstances your religious faith and convictions would be in any danger. The Protestant Churches of Ulster would be quite able to take care of themselves even under those circumstances. (Cheers.) The days of religious persecution are gone. The Inquisition cannot be re-established in the nineteenth century. There might be—I think there would be—petty annoyances of which you would have a right to complain. There might be injustice, grievous injustice, perpetrated upon you under such circumstances; but, after all, anything in the nature of active oppression and persecution is out of the question. But what I fear, what I repudiate on your behalf, and what I hope you will repudiate to the utmost of your power, is the possibility of submitting your intelligence, your orderly and regulated life, your great commercial reputation, to the rule of an authority which is to be officered by the men who invented the Plan of Campaign and propounded the no-rent manifesto. (Cheers.)

#### A LESSON FROM AMERICA.

Gentlemen, we have had some experience of what an Irish Nationalist Government means. I will not refer to past history. I will not speak of Irish Parliaments which have existed in the past, although I will say that the Catholic Parliament of Tyrconnell and the Protestant Parliament before the Union combined between them all the worst vices that could possibly distinguish a legislative body. (Cheers.) Neither will I refer to our experience, our daily experience, of boards of guardians and municipal corporations in which the

National League has the upper hand, although their proceedings form a very interesting page of Parliamentary history, and were discussed, and fully discussed, before a Parliamentary committee. But I will take my illustration from another country, which has always been the home of discontented Irishmen, and where they are free from any of the disadvantages and from the restrictions of which they complain so much at home. America has given a welcome to strangers, and has allowed to them such liberties and privileges that it has been possible for the Irish emigrant within a very short time of his reaching the shores of America to obtain a predominant influence and absolute control over some of the institutions of his adopted country. (Hear, hear.) In that way the Irish vote, which is always very powerful, has been absolutely supreme in some of the great cities, and notoriously at one time in the greatest of all, the city of New York. (Cheers.) The Government of New York—it was not called an Irish Parliament, it was known by the name of the Tammany Ring—that Government, according to all impartial American opinion, was the most corrupt, the most immoral, the most ineffective, with which a civilised people have ever been afflicted. (Hear, hear.) Gentlemen, the experience is not encouraging to us, and consequently part I cannot accept as desirable or possible the degradation of the great city of Belfast and the province of Ulster under a Tammany Ring in Dublin. (Loud cheers.)

#### THE POSITION OF ULSTER—A QUESTION FOR MR. GLADSTONE.

But now, gentlemen, if I have correctly represented your opinion in reference to this matter—(“You have”)—if I am justified in saying that you will not under any circumstances transfer your allegiance from the great Parliament of Westminster—the mother of Parliaments—(cheers)—to some pale travesty in Dublin, draped with sham properties for the benefit and glorification of a Committee of the National League—(“Never,” and cheers)—if I am justified in saying that on your part, I am justified in asking Mr. Gladstone what he intends to do in face of your refusal. (Cheers.) Bear in mind what this question is. It is not the question of Home Rule for Ireland. We must admit that the majority in the three Southern

provinces are in favour of some change which they call Home Rule, and which would relieve them from the interference and control of the Parliament at Westminster. I think they are wrong. (Cheers.) I think that they would be the first to regret such a concession if it were ever made. But for the moment and for the sake of argument, let us assume that it is right that they should have this relief—that they should have this separate Government—even then I say that there is no reason why the people of Ulster, who do not want this separate Government, who rejoice in the connection which they have honoured and illustrated—there is no reason I say why the people of Ulster should be forcibly severed from their relations with Great Britain; and, above all, there is no reason why they should be put under a domination which they have every reason to distrust and suspect. (Cheers.) I think, then, that I am entitled in your name and on your behalf—I should not venture to put any further question on my own authority, as I know that Mr. Gladstone would not recognise it—(laughter)—but on your behalf and in your name I ask Mr. Gladstone when he speaks at Nottingham in the course of the next week to tell us plainly—(cheers)—so that every man may understand—(cheers)—how in any future scheme which he may propose for the government of Ireland he intends to deal with the claims of Ulster. (Cheers.) I have asked the question before—I have never received a satisfactory answer. The other day Mr. John Morley—(groans)—speaking as Mr. Gladstone's lieutenant to a meeting of free-lunchers—(laughter and cheers)—which was invited to Templecombe to enjoy the hospitality of one of Mr. Gladstone's recent creations—(laughter)—Mr. Morley undertook to reply to a challenge which I had previously addressed to him. Mr. Morley said that it was a work of supererogation for the Gladstonians to explain their programme or give any details, for all the world knew perfectly well what they meant. (Laughter.) He said—"We mean to stand firm as a rock to Mr. Gladstone's plan, and to those modifications in it to which Mr. Gladstone has himself consented". Gentlemen, that is a very oracular reply, but it conveys very little information. (Hear, hear.) What are the modifications to which Mr. Gladstone has consented? How do they affect the province of Ulster? How do they affect the claims of the loyal population of Ireland? All that Mr. Gladstone has said is this—that if a practical

scheme for the separate treatment of Ulster could be proposed—(laughter)—and if this scheme could be recommended by a predominant, or at all events by a general, acceptance, that then it would receive at his hands the most favourable consideration, with every desire to do what equity might seem to recommend. (Laughter.) I do not know whether that conveys much comfort to your minds. (Loud cries of “No”.) But I may point out to you that there is in this statement no pledge, no promise whatever, except that if Mr. Gladstone is once more in power—(“Never”)—he will use his own discretion as to how he will deal with Ulster. (Cheers and a Voice : “He will never get the chance”.) Now, gentlemen, I think under these circumstances, and considering the importance of the question, that we are entitled to ask Mr. Gladstone to tell us a little more of his mind. (Hear, hear.) We will put to him a plain question. We will ask him to be good enough to answer it with a “Yes” or a “No”. We will ask him will he, in any future scheme which he may put before the people of the three kingdoms, provide for a separate treatment of the province of Ulster, or of any portion of that province? (Hear, hear.) Surely it is not too much to ask for an affirmative or a negative answer to such a question as that. Your lives, your property, your interests, all depend upon the answer. (Cheers.) And yet I predict that at Nottingham Mr. Gladstone will put it by. (Laughter and cheers.) Mr. Gladstone insists upon a blank cheque, and will not tell you, and will not tell the people of the three kingdoms, what he intends to do with it. All he will tell you is that you must give him power, and when he has power—when he can do what he likes—then he will tell you what he intends to do. (Cheers.) I know that there are some reasons, and good reasons, why Mr. Gladstone should be unwilling to answer such a question as that I have put to him. It is all very well for Mr. Morley to give us occasional glimpses of his mind, and to show that at least he has learned nothing and forgotten nothing in the course of the last two years, but that he remains of the same mind, firm to the old plan, believing it to be the best, and that though he may be willing to make modifications, he will take care that these modifications shall not materially alter the original plan. Mr. Gladstone is too old a Parliamentary hand to make such a technical mistake. Mr. Gladstone knows that if he were to tell us that he is prepared to treat

Ulster separately, Mr. Parnell would not give a brass button for any Home Rule Parliament which had not authority over Ulster, and above all which had no power to tax the most wealthy and prosperous province in the kingdom. (Cheers.) And, on the other hand, if Mr. Gladstone were to say plainly that it was his intention to pass by your just representations, to give no consideration to the views and wishes of the loyal part of the population in Ireland, and to coerce it, if need be, into submission, then, I think, he would be offering a provocation to a high-spirited people, to which it would be almost impossible to submit, and at the same time he would strain almost to breaking the loyalty even of his own subservient followers. (Cheers.)

#### THE RETENTION OF THE IRISH MEMBERS AT WESTMINSTER.

Now, there is another point which I think has a great interest for you here, and to which I should like to refer. If I understand your views, you repudiate altogether any severance from the traditions and the history, the responsibilities and the privileges, of the great nation with which you have been so long connected. (Cheers.) Your citizens have led our armies and our fleets; they have sat at our council boards; there is not a page in our annals which has not been illustrated by their deeds. (Hear, hear.) We are all members of one great community—(hear, hear)—we are joint-heirs of the glories and the possessions of the United Kingdom—(cheers)—and, unless I very much mistake your spirit, you are not willing to surrender this glorious inheritance—(“Never”)—this part in a mighty empire—for a second place in a petty kingdom, which is to be founded on a new constitution, framed by the Convention of Chicago—(cheers)—and intended as a substitute for the Ten Commandments. (Laughter.) And, therefore, you desire to maintain your full and free representation in the Imperial Parliament of Britain; yes, and also because you believe that this Imperial Parliament is the guarantee for your lives and liberties, which would be imperilled by any subordinate authority representing merely a local predominance. (Hear, hear.) But, gentlemen, under these circumstances, I say at any rate you are entitled to ask from Mr. Gladstone how does he intend to

deal with you. Mr. Gladstone says that the exclusion of the Irish members from Westminster is not an essential part of his plan. (Laughter.) He has said in one of his recent speeches that he thought the matter might be left over for the present—might be left in its existing position until in a few years we can come to its further consideration with better hopes of a settlement. Well, gentlemen, that is a Gladstonian utterance. (Laughter and cheers.) It leaves too much to the imagination. (Renewed laughter and cheers.) With us the continued supremacy, the effective and undoubted supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, and the full representation of every part of the United Kingdom in that Parliament, are essential, cardinal conditions of any alteration in the government of Ireland—(cheers)—or of any part of the kingdom, and with us they are the sole and only guarantees for the continued integrity of the country. Now, in the speech by Mr. Morley to which I have already referred, although he did not reply to my challenge, although he gave me no details of their new plan which is to be substituted for the Bill that has been dead so many times, and which still threatens us with resurrection—(laughter and cheers)—he challenged me to propose a substitute—he challenged me to put before the people of the three kingdoms the exact details of the plan by which I would concede to Ireland a certain extension of the privileges and rights of local government. I confess I think this challenge is not in accordance with Mr. Morley's usual candour. He is the last man in the world to make such a demand upon me, because he knows exactly what I would propose and how far I think it safe to go. Ever since the Round Table Conference—(laughter)—he and his colleagues have been in possession of my mind upon this subject. I do not know whether my plan would meet with general approval, but at least Mr. Morley and his friends are perfectly well acquainted with it, and it was only when it became necessary for them to say how far they accepted it, and how far Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell were prepared to accept it, that they found a pretext for delaying further negotiations and refused to give any information. Gentlemen, I think you will agree with me that this is not encouraging. I am not prepared to make further advances, at all events till I know that my advances will be met in a spirit of reciprocal frankness. (Hear, hear.)



## THE PARNELLITE ALLIANCE.

But, in the meantime, there are two preliminary questions which I should be very happy to discuss with our opponents, and upon which I should be glad to have a full expression of their views. (Hear, hear.) In the first place I should like to know what are their relations with Mr. Parnell—(cheers)—what are the conditions of the alliance they have formed. That is a very important question. (Hear, hear.) In past times the Liberal party has honourably asserted itself as the guardian of public law and order. It has proclaimed the necessity of maintaining the dignity of Parliament as the sole guarantee for the continued efficiency of our free representative institutions. But within the last year or two we have found a proportion of the Liberal party and some of its most trusted leaders tacitly encouraging, if they have not actually stimulated, obstruction in Parliament, and throwing their shield over disorder and disloyalty in Ireland. (Shame.) There was once upon a time a negotiation, the result of which was known as the Kilmainham treaty—(groans)—and the Kilmainham treaty provided as one of its articles that Mr. Parnell should use henceforth his best endeavours to maintain law and order in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) I want to know whether in the new treaty—the treaty of Hawarden—there is an article which requires the leaders of the Liberal party to throw their shield over disloyalty and sedition, and to defend outrage and violence. We are told that it is absolutely necessary that any plan for a settlement of the Irish question must be acceptable to Mr. Parnell. What does that mean? If it means that Mr. Parnell, or some one behind him—some one who pays the piper and pulls the strings—is to be dictator in this matter and to impose upon the Parliament at Westminster the final settlement of the affairs of an integral part of the United Kingdom—then, I say, such a proceeding is a surrender which is abject, humiliating, and dangerous. (Cheers.) If it only means, on the other hand, that Mr. Parnell and those whom he represents are to be consulted in any settlement of Ireland, I should be the first to admit the necessity of such consultation: and I do not suppose any reasonable person would dispute it; only I should claim that the representatives of the loyal population should have at least an equally influential vote—(hear, hear)—and that it should be understood that

any change in the Constitution should be—not a mere partisan settlement to be rammed down the throats of opponents—but a settlement which commended itself to the calm judgment of the great majority of the nation. (Cheers.)

#### THE COLONIAL EXAMPLE.

Well, then, there is a second question which I think is of even greater importance. On what principle are we to seek the settlement of this question? If all that is suggested is a great extension of local government and municipal privileges, I only say for myself that I attach such high importance to the privileges of local government, and to the incomplete arrangements which we already possess, that I should rejoice at a great and generous extension, believing in that way we should find relief from the congestion of Parliament, which is one of the greatest evils of our time, believing also that we should find in it scope for local ambition, and, above all, a development, a much-needed development, of the sense of local responsibility in Ireland. But, gentlemen, if, on the contrary, as I fear is the case from Mr. Gladstone's utterances, it is intended to seek a settlement on the principle of a distinct nationality of Ireland, then I beg you to understand what it is we are discussing, and to remember that, whatever this may be called, it is a scheme for complete and absolute independence. It is that, and nothing else. (Cheers.) Now, I think I can make that clear to you in a minute. I ask you if you think it probable that any nation in the world, claiming to be a nation, would be satisfied without all the privileges and prerogatives of nationhood? What are they? They are control over its own legislation, including its criminal legislation, control over its commercial relations, control over its connection with foreign countries, control over its army and navy. Mr. Gladstone on many occasions has referred to the case of our self-governing colonies as an illustration. In his last speech he spoke of New South Wales; in a previous one he spoke of Canada. But, gentlemen, are we going to blind ourselves to the fact that the tie which unites us to our self-governing colonies is one of the slenderest description, that it is one which can be broken at the pleasure of any one of these colonies, and that we should have nothing to say to it? Already the great colonies have control over

their own criminal law and judicature. They have entire control over their internal taxation; they make their own tariffs; some of them have an army or militia of their own; and now they are getting a separate navy. The arrangement between our colonies and ourselves is essentially a temporary one. It cannot remain as it is. Either, as I hope may be the case, it will be in the future strengthened by ties of federation—(cheers)—or it will be loosened altogether. (Hear, hear.) Already you have in the colony of Canada, the greatest of all our colonies, an agitation for what is called commercial union with the United States. Commercial union with the United States means free trade between America and the Dominion, and a protective tariff against the mother country. If Canada desires that, Canada can have it; but Canada can only have it knowing perfectly well that commercial union with America in such circumstances means political separation from Great Britain. (Hear, hear.) For it is quite impossible for Great Britain to continue to retain all the responsibilities and obligations of the connection when all the advantages of it are taken away. And, therefore, let us not shut our eyes for a moment to the fact that, if we are called upon to consider in the case of Ireland a proposition for making Ireland like Canada or like New South Wales, we are called upon to consider a proposition for separation—whatever our opponents may call it—a proposition for creating Ireland a separate kingdom, probably a separate Republic, and it must be upon that ground and with that understanding that we discuss the conditions.

#### THE COERCION OF ULSTER.

Well, gentlemen, I ask you are you prepared to accept this separation? (No, no.) And if you are not, if you refuse—(a Voice: "Fight")—I wonder, gentlemen, whether Mr. Morley—(groans)—with his keen appreciation of the evils of arbitrary authority—Mr. Morley, who shrinks from defending the police when they resist with arms the violence of a brutal mob—I wonder whether Mr. Morley is coming down here with troops of horse and foot to coerce you. (Cheers.) Is he going to force you to accept a settlement which in your hearts and consciences you believe will be disastrous to your best interests? ("Never.") And, if he were willing to attempt it, I do

not think he would find many followers. (Hear, hear.) It is because the strength of your resistance is misunderstood and unknown—(cheers)—that the people of Great Britain, or many of them, have been led to support Mr. Gladstone in a proposal which might be Home Rule for a part of Ireland, but which would mean the servitude of Ulster. (Renewed cheers.) I suppose Mr. Morley hopes to convert you—(laughter)—and that it is with that object that such missionaries are sent down as Mr. Sexton—(groans)—Mr. Healy—(groans)—and Mr. O'Brien—(renewed groans)—and it is anticipated that they will touch the hearts of the men of Ulster and lead you to find salvation in the gospel of public plunder. (Cheers.) I remember some years ago—shortly after I entered Parliament—listening to a very eloquent speech by Mr. P. J. Smyth, who was then member for Westmeath. Mr. Smyth was a Nationalist and a patriot of the old stamp, before patriotism became profitable—(laughter)—and was quoted in the market at so many dollars a head. (Cheers.) And Mr. Smyth was accordingly repudiated before his death by the new school. But on the occasion to which I refer he warned the irreconcilable party that they had no claim to independence unless they showed themselves worthy of it—(hear, hear)—and he pointed out to them that defiance of the law and abuse of the privileges which they already enjoyed were but a poor preparation for the greater liberties which they demanded. But, gentlemen, this warning has been neglected. The men who claim to be the government of Ireland are now endeavouring to make all government impossible. Those who desire to be entrusted with the duty of framing your laws, are the men who teach that no law need be obeyed by those who disapprove of it. The future judges insult the Bench—the future Executive defy the police. They sow the wind, and they will reap the whirlwind. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, they are not safe guides and teachers. (Cheers.) They are not the stuff of which a prudent nation should make its governors, and above all you—you who have most to lose from the reckless policy which would destroy the credit and reputation upon which you have founded your enterprises and industries—you will refuse to exchange your right to live under a Constitution beneath which your ancestors and yourselves have prospered, for submission to a Parliament in Dublin, which is to be officered by a Committee of the National League. (Cheers.) I do not conceal from you that in my

judgment the danger is great and imminent. We in England have fought the fight hitherto, not without success. (Cheers.) I think it more than probable that the brunt of the contest will now fall on your shoulders. I believe that you will quit yourselves like men—(cheers)—whenever the liberties and privileges you seek to defend are assailed, and I have faith in the ultimate good sense of the majority of my fellow-countrymen. This United Kingdom of ours has been built up by the sacrifices and the resolution of many generations. It has stood the shock of the storm and the rage of the whirlwind. May we not say of it now in the words of the American poet who lived to witness the greatest contest of our time, waged in order to defend the integrity of the commonwealth—

Sail on, oh, ship of State,  
Sail on, oh, Union strong and great ;  
Humanity, with all its fears,  
With all its hopes of future years,  
Is hanging breathless on thy fate.

(Loud and prolonged applause.)

*COLERAINE, October 13th, 1887.*

## THE IRISH LAND QUESTION.

[On October 13th Mr. Chamberlain spoke at Coleraine in a marquee specially erected for the purpose. Upwards of 5000 people were present and the greatest enthusiasm prevailed.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, who on rising received quite an ovation, said—  
Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen, I thank you very much for the enthusiasm and the cordiality with which you have carried the resolution that has just been put from the chair. I can assure you that it is a great pleasure for me to come here and to meet so many representatives of the loyal part of Ireland. (Cheers.) I take an even greater interest in this meeting, because it affords to me an opportunity of conferring with the representatives of the agricultural interests on matters in which they have a vital concern. And I think I might say for my friend Mr. Collings and myself that we do not come before you as newborn friends—(cheers)—like some of those who recently have been pressing forward in your service since there was place and power and money to be gained by it—(cheers)—but we have taken an interest in this question ever since we have been in public life. We have followed the land legislation of Ireland, and we have done all we could do to secure a full and favourable consideration for just and reasonable demands. Now, therefore, I come amongst you claiming to be a friend, to congratulate you on the success which has been achieved, and to confer with you as to future necessary reforms. I have ventured to anticipate the proceedings a little, and I have been reading the resolution which will be proposed to you when I sit down. I am very glad to find that in that resolution it is declared that you have a firm belief that your vital interests are concerned in the maintenance of the Union, and that you are determined to do all that in you lies to prevent any weakening or lessening of the bonds that bind you to Great Britain. I had an opportunity recently, in Ulster, of dwelling on the principles that underlie this great question.

To-day, if you will permit me, I will not speak of them. I will put aside for the moment questions of sentiment and questions of the duty which every patriotic citizen owes to his country although I know that those will be very powerful factors amongst the men of this part of Ireland, connected as they are with Englishmen and Scotchmen, whose faith and whose characteristics you share, and whose kinship I am quite sure you will not be willing to disown.

#### A PRACTICAL QUESTION.

But I want to speak to you on another aspect of the question. I want to appeal to you to-day as hard-headed men—and if you are worthy of your descent you must be hard-headed—I want to appeal to you on the practical aspect of the question. I want to ask you to consider with me how far your material interests will be advanced by surrendering the protection of the great Parliament at Westminster, and accepting the rule of Mr. O'Brien—(groans)—Mr. Sexton—(groans)—and Dr. Tanner. (Laughter and groans.) If you have followed the speeches of the advocates of the National League, you will agree with me that, while these gentlemen are very definite on one side of the question, they are very vague, indeed, on the other side, which is at least as important. They are very eloquent in their denunciation of the government and the laws under which they live—according to them everything that is is wrong. But they are very vague, indeed, when it becomes necessary for them to tell us what they propose to substitute for that which they propose to destroy. (Hear, hear.) And yet as sensible men it is a matter of considerable interest to you to know what the alternative is. Bad as is the government of the brutal Saxon, bad as are the laws which come to you in a foreign garb, it would perhaps be just as well before you change them to know what would be the character of the Government which would be established by the National League, and what would be the laws which would be made by the framers of the Plan of Campaign. (Cheers.) And, gentlemen, when these eloquent advocates of disruption, all speaking to their dupes in other parts of Ireland, draw fancy pictures of the prosperity which will follow from the change they advocate, they wish you to believe that you have only to substitute their Government in Dublin for the rule under which you

and your ancestors have lived and prospered for nearly the whole of a century—that you have only to make this change and instantly there will be no rents—(laughter)—no evictions, no taxes—(laughter)—no police. (Laughter.) There will be no law-breaking then, and that is easy to be understood, because there will be no law. (Laughter and cheers.) Great industries will spring up, as if by magic, in all parts of Ireland; even the soil of the land will become more fertile than before, and prices will immediately go up. (Cheers and laughter.)

Gentlemen, I do not know that I am more sceptical than most men, but I confess that I regard with very considerable doubt and hesitation this fancy picture. (Hear, hear.) I should like you to consider for a moment what are the plain facts of the case. Ireland, as you know, is a poor country. It is not blessed with those mineral resources which have created, or at all events largely contributed to, the wealth of Great Britain and other favoured countries. By the necessity of the case the greater part of its population is compelled to look for its livelihood to agriculture; but by its geographical position—by the disposition of Providence—Ireland has been placed in close juxtaposition to the wealthiest country in the world, and one which has become its greatest and most profitable customer. Well, but, gentlemen, if that is true, does it not appear to you that it would be a most suicidal thing for any Irishman to desire to weaken the bonds which unite them with a great and wealthy neighbour—to bring about a severance of the connection which if it is advantageous to the greater country confers still larger benefits on the poorer and weaker island? (Cheers.) Is it worth your while for a change in the government and in the constitution to risk the loss of your most profitable trade? I know I shall be told, as we have been told again and again in the course of this controversy, that separation is not in question, that these gentlemen have no desire, no intention, to break the last link which connects Ireland to England, although that was the avowed object of every one of them two or three years ago, and before it was unsafe to put forward such a view.

#### IRELAND'S GREAT NEED.

But I do not care a brass button what the intentions of these gentlemen are. What I know is what will be the result of their



policy. Whether they like it or not, whether they mean it or not—as to which we have grave doubt—I am perfectly certain that the creation of a practically independent Parliament in Dublin will be followed within a few years, and probably within a few months, by the absolute severance of Ireland from Great Britain. That, therefore, is the issue we have to discuss. We need not consider plans of Home Rule which are accepted as instalments by the Nationalist Party. We have to consider what would be the result upon your interests of an absolute separation between the three kingdoms. The first reflection which presents itself to our minds is this, that what Ireland most needs at the present time is capital, to develop its resources and complete its communications, to enable the industrious farmers of Ireland to bring their produce to the most favourable markets. In Great Britain you have capital and to spare, millions and millions of money constantly seeking investment and which frequently finds very bad investments in foreign countries, whose interests English capital has done so much to promote. If Ireland were peaceable and settled, if permanent order and security were established, this capital would be poured into Ireland, and it would immediately lead to a great improvement in all the industries of the country, and especially in the agricultural interest, upon which so many of you depend. (Cheers.) But do you believe, do you think, that capitalists, who are the most timid of men, are going to send their money into Ireland, to unbutton their pockets at a time when the persons who claim the future government of Ireland, and who declare that it will be in their hands in the course of a few months, are doing everything in their power to show that law is only made to be broken, and that no contract is sacred? (Cheers.) I say this agitation, and still more the practical result of the agitation, is doing much to destroy the credit of Ireland, and thereby to injure everyone of you. (Hear, hear.)

#### PARNELLISM IN POWER.

I should like to raise another point. Do you think, if you had a separate Irish Administration in Dublin, that it would be an effective Administration? ("No.") Would it be economical? Are you certain that it would be honest? ("No, no," and laughter.) These are

important points to settle before you entrust your destinies and properties to the care of these gentlemen. (Hear, hear.) Surely you are entitled to ask them for a character from their last place. (Loud laughter and cheers.) But I am afraid that many of them would find a great difficulty in complying with such a natural request. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) Now, let me put before you a rather suggestive fact. I have often said I am a Home Ruler, although I do not mean by Home Rule what some of these gentlemen mean, but I am in favour of local government. I have had a good deal to do with it, and I have seen its virtues and merits, and I have an abiding faith in its importance. Well, you have already a certain amount of Home Rule in Ireland. You have Home Rule in Dublin—that is to say, the citizens of Dublin have practical control of their own affairs; and you have Home Rule in Belfast, and the citizens of Belfast have there also control over matters of municipal interest and importance. The Corporation of Dublin is in the hands of the Nationalist party, and the gentlemen who are ambitious of governing Ireland, who seem to be especially ambitious of governing the Province of Ulster. (Laughter, and "Never".) The Lord Mayor of Dublin is a most distinguished patriot, in receipt of a salary of £3000 a year, which undoubtedly helps to adorn his patriotism. (Laughter.) And the other day I observe that, having broken the law in his private capacity, he thought fit to throw over his offence, when he came to answer it before the courts of law, the shield and the authority of municipal dignity and position. (Laughter.) He went to the courts of law attended by his mace-bearer and his sword-bearer, and I suppose if he had been sent to prison he would have had them sleeping on plank beds on either side. (Laughter.) I confess I think that such a proceeding on the part of the Lord Mayor of Dublin was an abuse of municipal privilege. (Cheers.) As Lord Mayor of Dublin he should act only in his corporate capacity. He has no right to confuse his position as representative of the ratepayers of Dublin with his position as a private citizen who has broken the law. But the Corporation of Dublin, which can afford to pay this Lord Mayor £3000 a year, I have no doubt conducts all its business on a similar scale of magnificent expenditure, and the result is that, I am informed, the consolidated rates of Dublin are 8s. 3d. in the pound on one side of the town, and 9s. 3d. in the pound on the other side of the town, and at

the same time I am told that that administration—the corporate administration of Dublin—leaves a great deal to be desired—(laughter)—and that in fact the chief exploits of this great corporation are the purchase of stone from the quarries of Mr. Parnell at a price considerably greater than they could have got similar material from other places—(“Ballintoy”)—and the attempt to alter the name of the only street in their city which has a European reputation. Well, but, gentlemen, that is the result of Home Rule under Nationalist guidance in Dublin. In Belfast the Mayor is a citizen who serves his fellow-citizens without a salary of £3000 a year, without any salary at all, and at his own expense; and, perhaps in consequence of the spirit which animates the Mayor of Belfast, and which no doubt animates all his colleagues—(hear, hear)—I find that the rates of Belfast, so far from being 8s. 3d. and 9s. 3d. in the pound are only 4s. 11d. on the lower class of property and 6s. 10d. upon the highest class of property in the town. And, at the same time, I can say, from my own personal observation, that you would not easily find a large town in the United Kingdom which is better governed in regard to all municipal expenditure than the town of Belfast. Gentlemen, then I say, from this illustration, you may judge whether or not a Dublin Parliament would not be an expensive luxury—one which I think even you cannot afford to give to yourselves. (Cheers.)

#### THE BUSINESS CAPACITY OF THE NATIONALISTS.

Then, let us take another point in connection with this proposed change. The success of a Government—the success of any Government—must depend to a very large extent upon the administrative ability of the men who compose it. Now, I can speak from a good deal of painful experience, and certainly I have the highest admiration for the power of speech of the Nationalist members. (Laughter.) I do not think I have ever met a like number of men who are able to talk for a like number of hours, and to say less in the course of their speeches. (Renewed laughter.) It reminds me of the description which was given of a former Lord Castlereagh by your poet Moore, when he said that—

Up and down his awkward arm doth sway,  
And spouts, and spouts, and spouts, and spouts away  
In one weak, washy, everlasting flood.

(Loud laughter.) But, gentlemen, one wants to know whether these men of words are also men of action—whether they have been successful in the conduct of their own business. Have they come to Parliament from a successful prosecution of great enterprises, either private or public? Have they deserved well of their fellow-citizens by the services that they have rendered on local boards and in connection with the municipal institutions which Ireland already possesses? Well, I am afraid the answer would not be invariably satisfactory. (“No, no.”) For my part, I can only recollect at the present time one attempt on the part of these gentlemen to give a practical turn to the agitation which they have been conducting, and that was when Mr. Parnell proposed and carried forward a scheme which was known, I think, as the Land Migration Company. It was a scheme which was intended to transfer to other lands the poorer tenants who are overcrowded in certain of the districts on the Western coast of Ireland. It was a worthy object; it was a good idea; it was a capital opportunity for showing that these men had a real interest in their suffering fellow-countrymen, and that they were able practically to deal with the difficulties of their condition. But unfortunately Mr. Parnell’s Land Migration Company has been a dismal failure. You hardly hear of it now. “Oh, no, we never mention it. (Laughter.) Its name is never heard,” and yet these men, who have completely broken down in attempts successfully to manage an enterprise which only required an investment of a few thousands or a few tens of thousands of pounds, claim to have control of the whole government of Ireland, and, above all, claim to have the privilege of governing the people of the most prosperous portion of Ireland.

#### THE PARNELLITES AND THE TENANT FARMERS.

But it may be said, and it will be said, these gentlemen may not be administrators, but at least they will be splendid legislators, and above all they will make short work of the landlords. That is a point in their favour which is being put forward again and again by the advocates of a Parliament in Dublin. Now, I put aside for the moment the morality of making short work of the landlords, as suggested by the Plan of Campaign. I put aside also the question

whether or not in the long run your interests would gain by the policy of confiscation which would give a blow to credit throughout the country. But I want to point out to you that these gentlemen, after all, when put to the test have done very little for the interests of the tenant-farmers. Let me take one instance in support of what I am saying. The Nationalist party were perfectly ready to accept Mr. Gladstone's Land Bill. (Hear, hear.) They did not hesitate to give their assent to a proposal which would have compelled every tenant in Ireland to be the owner of his land on the basis of twenty years' purchase of the old judicial rents, although three months later these very same men declared that the judicial rents were absolutely impossible and could not be paid. But they were quite willing to commit you and the tenant-farmers throughout Ireland to what they call impossible rents, providing they could get the control of the Government and the reins of power in their hands, and have the opportunity of taxing you to their hearts' content. Well, then, take another point. Do you recollect what Mr. Parnell himself said a year or two ago—I think when he was in the United States of America? He said he would not have taken off his coat in this rent agitation, or for any measure of practical reform, if he had not seen at the end of it the independence of Ireland, and the breaking of the last link—(A voice: "That was said at Waterford".)—At any rate it was said two or three years ago, and that enables you to measure the value of the assurances which these gentlemen give you. When they come down here, it is not Home Rule they talk of. It is of the tenant-farmers and their interest in the land. When they give you a glimpse of their real mind they show it is Home Rule and Home Rule alone—that is to say, it is the possession of the Government—for which they care, and that the interests of the tenant-farmers are only of secondary importance.

#### THE LAND ACT OF 1887.

Well, gentlemen, I say if you follow me in these observations you will agree that, whatever grievances there may be for which you still think you are justified in claiming redress, you are not likely to better your position by substituting for the appeal which you now possess to the representative Parliament at Westminster the opportunity of laying your claims before a new Parliament in Dublin. I

venture to say that the Parliament at Westminster is at present the best tribunal to which you can possibly appeal. It is a democratic Parliament. That is to say, it is a Parliament which represents proportionately the strength and opinions of the people. It is a Parliament which has sympathy, more than any Parliament of the present century with all just and reasonable claims; and it is a Parliament in which no class and no vested interest would be able to silence any fair demand. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I ask you to bring your case before the Parliament at Westminster. I appeal to the experience of this year as justifying what I have said. In the last Session of Parliament we were able to pass a Land Bill which, whatever its defects—and you know that I have held that it might be still further improved and have given effect to my opinion by my votes—whatever its defects may be—I maintain is the most liberal and most generous which has yet been offered to the tenants of Ireland by any Parliament, either Liberal or Conservative. And, gentlemen, I would like to ask you to contrast the reception which this measure met with from the National League party with that which it met from your representatives—the true representatives of the people of Ulster. When this Bill, which contained many valuable provisions, was brought from the House of Lords it was incomplete, but, taking it as it stood, it was still a boon which it would have been the height of folly to have rejected. It contained provisions for including in the benefits of the Land Act the majority, almost the whole, of the leaseholders of Ireland. I wish it had included the whole of them. (Hear, hear.) It contained provisions for dealing with capricious evictions; provisions which referred back the scale of judicial rents fixed under the Land Act of 1881 to the date of the application; and it contained also other provisions of greater or less importance. (Hear, hear.) The Parnellite party, when this Bill came down to the House of Commons, did their utmost to destroy it, both by direct opposition and indirectly by those methods of Parliamentary obstruction of which they are past masters. (Hear, hear.) They urged again and again that the Bill was not worth having, and that they would be glad if the Government would withdraw it, and they exhausted every method known to Parliament in order to induce the Government to withhold this great boon from the tenants of Ireland. (Shame.)

If there are any of you who listen to me who are expecting advantages under this Act, if there are any of you who anticipate that as leaseholders, or in any other capacity, you will secure under this Act a just and reasonable consideration and treatment of your position, at least I can state that you have not much to be grateful for to the Parnellite members. (Loud cheers.) But your representatives—the true representatives, as I have called them, of the tenant-farmers—Mr. Lea—(cheers)—and Mr. Russell—(cheers)—and I think I may add Mr. Sinclair—(cheers)—who, although he is no longer a member for Ireland, continues to represent your interests as a member for a Scottish constituency—these gentlemen, with an ability and a persistence which is worthy of your utmost gratitude, put forward your claims and welcomed this Bill as it came from the House of Lords, and at the same time endeavoured to amend and improve it. (Cheers.) I only followed in their footsteps, but we were able to make such friendly representations to the Government as secured a great enlargement of the original scope of the measure. And, let me say here, I think it only fair to say it, that, although we could not expect from the Conservative members from Ulster, having regard to their duty as members of the party in power, as followers of the Government, that active and public support, which we were able to give as independent members, yet they gave the most material assistance. (Cheers.) They used in private their influence with the Government with the most beneficial results. The result of our efforts, then, was that, as I say, the scope of the measure was largely extended, and above all, we secured what I regard as one of the most important parts of the measure—that is, the revision of the judicial rents where they were shown to be unfair in consequence of the fall in prices. It is a tremendous provision. To break down the sanctity of a judicial rent fixed only a few years ago by an Act of Parliament was indeed to adopt a principle more radical than has ever been put before the British House of Commons. I think it was a just principle, but I say that we should be most ungrateful if we did not recognise not only the action of the Government but the action of the majority of the landlords of Ireland, who assented to a proposition which heretofore, at all events, had been rejected almost without discussion.

## THE QUESTION OF ARREARS.

I want to ask you at this period to consider another illustration of the way in which your interests were looked after by the representatives of the Parnellite party. They will be coming down here, I suppose, directly. ("No, no.") Well, I should be very glad to know that they were coming, and I should be very glad that you should hear their answer to what I am going to say. I told Mr. Dillon, in the House of Commons, I was coming shortly to Ireland, and I should take an opportunity to put before any meeting of agriculturists that I might address, my sense of the way in which he and those who support him interfered to prevent even additional boons that might have been conceded to those whom they claim to represent. In one respect, the Act of 1887 is still defective. (Hear, hear.) It allows the courts to deal with the judicial rent, and if they consider that it has become unfair in consequence of the fall in prices, it allows them to make a reduction in the rent, but it does not allow them to deal with the arrears which may have arisen in consequence of excessive rent in previous years. (Hear, hear.) I think every one would feel that it would have been very desirable that the courts should have had an equitable jurisdiction over the arrears which may have accumulated, and, while relieving the tenant for the future, they should also deal with the question as to how far he was justly indebted in the past. The Government recognised this from the first; they were willing to deal with it from the first; they were perfectly prepared to allow the court to deal with the arrears, only they said, and said truly, it would be a perfect mockery to allow the court to deal with arrears of rent unless, at the same time, it was able to deal with the other debts the tenant might have incurred, whether to the money-lender, the gombeen man, or to other creditors. For what is the use of relieving a man even from all payment of rent if he remains burdened with an overwhelming debt which he cannot possibly meet arising from other causes? The Government endeavoured in the Bill as originally introduced to deal with this matter by what are known as the bankruptcy clauses, but they were generally disapproved of, and accordingly the Government withdrew them, and it became necessary to find a substitute. In the House of Commons, I ventured to propose an alternative plan. I suggested that, when



any application was made for a new and fair rent, and when the tenant sought to be relieved of any portion of his arrears of rent, that the court should be able to call upon him to give an account of all his debts and the names of his creditors, that notice would be sent to those creditors, and after hearing a statement of the facts that the Court should make a composition, if it were thought composition were necessary and just, of all his debts upon the same scale. Well, a process of that kind could be carried out without bankruptcy, without any considerable expenses ; and I think that, though it would, perhaps, to some extent, be a rough and ready method, yet if you could depend on the courts, you would have fair justice done as between the debtor and the creditor. And, in any case, you would in this way have relieved this man, and given him once more a fair chance ; because, as I have said, it is no use to leave men upon the land if they are in a hopeless condition of insolvency, so embarrassed that they cannot possibly till their land to advantage. When I made this proposal, Sir William Harcourt—(hisses)—speaking for the Gladstonian party, recommended that it should be accepted. He expressed his opinion that it was a fair proposal. He urged the Government to accept it, and he urged the Parnellite party to accept it. Thereupon the Chief Secretary stated that the Government would be willing to bring in clauses to carry out this suggestion if the Parnellite members present would give an undertaking that they would allow these clauses to pass without extravagant discussion, because, at that time of the Session, if they were going to be vehemently opposed, and made a means of obstructive discussion, it would be impossible to carry them. Mr. Dillon got up and absolutely refused to allow these clauses, or anything like them, to pass ; and it is owing to him and his party alone that this great additional boon, which would have made the Act of 1887 complete, which would have enabled the tenants to get rid of the arrears, and which would have enabled them, at the same time, to secure relief from other embarrassments—it was owing to Mr. Dillon and the Parnellite party that this change, this improvement, was rendered impossible. I confess I do not know what motives these gentlemen have for throwing their shield over the gombeen man, although I am told that that particular class of creditor has been, in many cases, a very prominent supporter of the National League in different parts of Ireland ; but, whatever their

motives may have been, I am bound to say that, as far as I can make out, the Irish Nationalist members are not greatly interested in measures of practical reform—measures affecting the material wants of the people of Ireland. They care very much more for the discussion of this constitutional question and for the alteration of government. I am confirmed in that by the recollection that in two previous Parliaments, in which I have sat—in the Parliament from 1874 to 1880, and again in the Parliament from 1880 to 1885—these Irish Nationalist representatives brought forward Bill after Bill for the reform of different parts of the administration and government of Ireland. Many of these were very good Bills; very admirable measures, and I was glad to support them; but at that time, in an unreformed Parliament, those gentlemen knew very well—we all knew to our regret—that it was impossible to get them carried. We could not get the support of the bulk of the Liberal party, much less of the Conservative party, for those measures of practical reform. (Hear, hear.) As long as they were impossible, their authors continued to bring in these Bills. The notice paper of the House of Commons was crowded with Bills brought forward by Nationalist members. But when you had a reformed Parliament, when you had a Parliament representing the democratic instincts of the people of Great Britain, when every one of those Bills was certain of favourable consideration, and probably would have been carried into law, then the Parnellite members made a clean sweep. Their reforming energy disappeared altogether. We heard not a word of any of these Bills for reforming local government, for reforming the land laws, for reforming every item of the administration and the legislation of Ireland.

#### THE SOLUTION OF THE IRISH QUESTION.

I want, if you will bear with me—(cries of “Go on”)—I am afraid I am presuming too much on your attention—(“Go on”)—but I should like to say a word or two as to the future. (Hear, hear.) I have spoken as to the past, but I have not concealed from you my own opinion that we have to expect from the Government, to hope for from the Government, still greater benefits than any that they have previously conferred upon us. (Cheers.) I do not pretend that the land question is settled. (Hear, hear.) I agree with

the second resolution, which is to be moved at this meeting, that the land question is the root difficulty of Irish discontent. (Cheers.) The agrarian question gives to the Parnellite party whatever influence, and support, and authority they now possess—(hear, hear)—and I do not believe that until that question is settled once for all that we can possibly expect to have peace and settled order in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) It is a very difficult question—a very complicated question—but it ought not to be beyond the reach of English statesmanship. (Cheers.) It is a question with which every civilised country has had in turn to deal. Russia, France, Germany—they have all had their land question. They have all settled it by very different methods, but always coming to the same result ; and, gentlemen, I believe, like these countries—like every other country which has been face to face with this problem—there is only one settlement possible, and that is to make the cultivators of the soil also the owners. (Loud cheers.) I have said it is a very difficult question. There are two great difficulties which stare us in the face, and with which we have at the outset to deal. The first question is, How is the valuation to be made upon which the transfer of ownership is to be based ? I am speaking not to those who cheer the members of the National League, but I am speaking to honest men—(cheers)—and I expect to express your sentiments when I say that, although you intend to look after your own interests, you do not intend to rob anybody else. (Cheers.) The question, therefore, is how to establish a fair valuation for the transfer that we all agree ought to be made. Now, gentlemen, I do not believe, for one moment, that you can possibly settle this question by any hard and fast rule, as Mr. Gladstone tried to do in his Land Bill. I do not believe that you can lay down a number of years' purchase of the judicial rent, whether it be twenty, or whether it be any other number, which would be fair for all the circumstances of the cases, or which could be universally adopted ; and I should think that the first condition of any settlement of this business would be that there should be a new and independent valuation for the purposes of purchase. (Cheers.) Just let me point out to you by an illustration what I mean, and how that arises. If I wanted to buy any house in London, in a good quarter of the town, I should expect to pay for the freehold five-and-twenty to thirty years' purchase of the rent ; but if I wanted to invest the same amount of

money in small house property in the East End of London, I should expect to pay only ten to fifteen years' purchase of the rent. And yet in both of these cases the rent is a fair rent, and nobody would dispute that the rent asked for is a fair rent under the circumstances. But when you come to fixing the capital value, you have to deal with the valuation on totally different terms. (Hear, hear.) I think, then, that this separate valuation for the purpose of purchase, is the foundation upon which the transfer of the ownership can take place. The second difficulty is how is the purchase-money to be provided. Now, I have said that it is hopeless to expect that the British public, the British taxpayers, will consent to the pledge of British credit. I am not arguing the question. I myself have said in public before, and I may be allowed to repeat it now, that in principle I do not object to the application of British credit to such a purpose. What I objected to in Mr. Gladstone's Bill was that the risk in his plan was too great; and, in the second place, I objected to lending British money for what was going to be a foreign country. (Cheers.) It is one thing to lend British money in a matter in which we are all concerned as fellow-citizens and fellow-subjects, but it is another thing to lend it for a country that is to be totally separated from us in the future. I do not want you to make any mistake. My opinion I retain. I am not very apt to change my opinion. But my opinion is of no consequence, in view of the universal protest on the part of the British taxpayer against risking his capital for the purpose of purchasing Irish land. Whatever I might say, or whatever the Government might say, no Government's life would be worth a month's purchase if they proposed to use British credit to any large extent for such a purpose. (Hear, hear.) Well, that makes the difficulty. If we cannot use British credit, we have got to find something which is equally good security. You will agree with me that nothing could be more unfair than to ask the landlords to part with their land, and to accept a smaller income, and that, at the same time, for any payment which might be made to them they should not have, at all events, as compensation an unimpeachable and absolute security.

#### LAND PURCHASE ON IRISH SECURITY.

Gentlemen, I believe it is possible to find such a security, a security which is just as good as British consols, which would always

find ready sale in the market, without going beyond Irish resources. I may point out to you that, after all, the land of Ireland—although Ireland is a poor country—is worth a good deal, and in spite of the agitation and fall in prices at the present moment, the agricultural valuation of Ireland is something like £9,000,000 sterling a year. But you have other sources from which you can increase and extend the security offered by the law. After all, it is not so much the ability to pay that we are afraid might be wanting. It is the willingness to pay. (Cheers.) It is the doctrine of the Plan of Campaign which makes people afraid of Irish security. (Hear, hear.) But I think it is possible so to guarantee any reasonable payment which might be made for the land of Ireland as to make it practicably unassailable. You have, for instance, a contribution from the National Exchequer to local objects, which might be pledged, and which amounts to nearly £2,000,000 a year. You must remember that you have also the local taxation of Ireland, amounting to two and a half millions, and, without going into details, I assert, without fear of contradiction, that there is reasonable ground for the conclusion that it is possible to find from your own resources a reliable security sufficient for carrying out any transactions of this kind. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I believe that any proposal of transfer should be carried out by means of local authorities. I desire to decentralise all administration on a question of this kind. (Cheers.) I would like to give properly constituted local authorities practical interest in the matter. I would make them responsible for the rent or payments which might be demanded under such a transfer—responsible for the interest due upon the bonds or other securities which might be issued. (Hear, hear.) I am not speaking entirely without book on this subject, for I have been able to put in writing a scheme in detail with this object. (Cheers.) I submitted that scheme to the Round Table Conference—(laughter)—and I believe it was carried to Mr. Gladstone. (Hear, hear.) I have not the right to say that he adopted my proposal, but it is a significant fact that, since he was made aware of it, he has stated in public that it might be possible to carry out the transfer of the land of Ireland from the owner to the cultivator, and to abolish altogether dual ownership on a sound and reasonable basis, without recourse to British aid. (Cheers.) We know, too, that the Government have similar proposals under consideration, and if they see their way to promote and bring

forward legislation with this object, they will certainly do more to secure the peace and prosperity of Ireland than all the agitators that ever lived. (Cheers.)

### THE CONGESTED DISTRICTS.

But, gentlemen, even a proposal of this kind, which with regard to the greater part of Ireland would secure such a result, does not apply to the whole of the country. I find that in Ulster alone there are 184,000 holdings, 141,000 of which are under thirty acres, and 20,000 of them are under five acres. In Donegal, in one county, mind you, there are 13,000 holdings under fifteen acres. Now, it will be perfectly evident to anyone who considers this that in the vast number of these cases the unfortunate occupiers of the soil have so small a plot of land under cultivation—even if they obtained it free of rent altogether—that they could not possibly make a livelihood out of it without extraneous means of subsistence. (Cheers.) It is absolutely necessary that something should be done for those people to meet their unfortunate condition. Something has already been done under similar circumstances to relieve the congestion in large towns. A few years ago, in the time of the last Conservative Government, the Artisans' Dwellings Act was passed. (Cheers.) The object of that measure was to remedy the unsanitary state of the houses of the working classes in large towns, and to remove the people to more pleasant and healthy habitations elsewhere. That act was defective in some particulars, and it has not been employed to the extent which it was hoped it would have been ; but very large schemes have been carried out—in no case more largely than in my own town of Birmingham—under which thousands and thousands of the working class have been transferred from districts in which it was absolutely impossible for them to live in health and comfort to districts in which decent existence has been perfectly possible. In my opinion you can do in the same way with regard to these congested agricultural districts, and you might provide by means of a satisfactory local authority, if one could be found, either for the county or the province, ✓ for the migration or emigration of the surplus population, and divide the land amongst those who remain upon it. You might do more than that. In these very poor counties it is quite impossible that the

works upon which the prosperity of the district largely depends can be carried out successfully by private enterprise. The State must interfere, and a large interference by the State, in order to promote the public works which are necessary for the well-being of this population, I believe to be one of the conditions of the problem. (Hear, hear.) I am glad to say that the Government has undertaken to do something in this direction. Already within the last year £50,000 have been voted for the purpose, and after the Royal Commission, which has been appointed to inquire into the material condition of Ireland, has made its final report, I have great hopes that a good deal more will be done, both in the way of providing means of communication and for developing in other directions the resources of this less-favoured part of Ireland. (Cheers.)

#### THE FIRST CONDITION OF PROGRESS—MAINTENANCE OF THE UNION.

But bear in mind that the first condition for any material improvement of this kind is the settled peace and order of the country—(hear, hear)—and the continued maintenance of the Union. If there is doubt upon either of these two points nothing will be done, nothing can be done, nothing ought to be done. (Hear, hear.) I do not believe for myself that any change of the kind I have suggested, any of the beneficial and remedial legislation—which I hope to see accomplished by the Parliament at Westminster—is feasible in the case of a Dublin Parliament. (Cheers.) You must maintain the Constitution as it is, you must secure the connection between Great Britain and Ireland if you desire to have the practical advantages which I believe are still to be derived from this connection. And, gentlemen, although I would gladly see any extension—any reasonable extension—of local government in Ireland which was consistent with the effectual supremacy of Parliament, I am perfectly convinced that such an alteration of the Constitution as has been proposed—in the first instance by Mr. Parnell and his friends, and which now, unfortunately, is supported by the former leader of the Liberal party—any change like that, even if it did not lead to anarchy and civil war, which is quite possible—(loud cheers)—would certainly result in commercial disaster and national bankruptcy. (Loud cheers.) I

thank you, and thank you most sincerely, for the kindness and patience with which you have heard me. I am indeed gratified by the reception I have met in Ulster, and I shall leave the province confirmed in the belief, which I entertained before I visited it, that all the strength of Ulster and the intelligence of Ulster, all the loyalty of Ulster, is strenuously on the side of the continued maintenance of the Union. (Loud cheers.) I am encouraged by the manifestations that I have witnessed of your enthusiasm and of your determination ; and you may rest assured that as far as my poor abilities and influence go they will always be used on your behalf and in your name—(cheers)—to resist the outrage and the insult that would be put upon the loyalty of Ulster if it were submitted to the degrading humiliation of a Dublin Parliament. (Loud and prolonged cheering.)



*BIRMINGHAM, April 18th, 1888.*

## A LESSON FROM AMERICA.

[On his return from America whither he had been as Chief Commissioner to settle the Fishery dispute between Great Britain and the United States, Mr. Chamberlain was received by the National Radical Union at a great meeting in the Town Hall, and numerous addresses were presented to him from Liberal Unionists in all parts of the United Kingdom.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, on rising to reply, was loudly cheered. He said:—It is a great pleasure to me to meet so many of my political friends and to receive the assurances of your continued sympathy and support which are contained in the addresses, some of which have just been read. I have not had time or opportunity to make myself acquainted with the contents of all of them. I can see they are couched in much too flattering terms (“No”), but I understand and I appreciate the spirit in which they have been presented. (Cheers.) I can assure you that during my absence in America I followed all your proceedings with the greatest interest. I knew that your good wishes attended me in the protracted negotiations in which I was engaged, and that you would feel something like a personal satisfaction at any success which followed upon my efforts. (Cheers.) I need not point out to you what I think is apparent to every intelligent and patriotic Englishman, the importance of good relations between ourselves and the great nation on the other side of the Atlantic—a nation becoming greater every day—with whom we have so many and such close ties; ties of blood, ties of history and tradition, and ties of common interest. I rejoice that, whatever may be the immediate result of our negotiations, at all events the Governments of both these great countries have given proof of their anxious desire to settle in an amicable way any difference that may arise between the two peoples. I believe that the good feeling which is universal here towards the United States is reciprocated on the other side—(hear, hear)—and I rely upon this sentiment to over-

shadow all other considerations, to lead to a peaceable settlement, to remove all causes of irritation, to pave the way for a development of good relations and good neighbourliness between the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race. (Cheers.) I am very glad of your presence here to-night as a proof of your sympathy with this mission and your approval of the efforts I made to carry it into effect ; but I am glad also to see you here because your presence affords a very convenient refutation of a misapprehension which appears to prevail among some of our Gladstonian friends, and which found expression the other night in a speech of Sir William Harcourt. He said at York in one of those epigrammatic sentences which would be perfect if they were true—(laughter)—that the National Radical Union was of no use in Birmingham, and that it had no existence elsewhere. (“Oh, oh.”) At all events, in Birmingham up to the present time we have maintained intact the Unionist representation of the borough, and, in spite of threats, we will maintain it to the end. (Cheers.) Outside Birmingham, it would appear from this list, there are nearly 100 centres of Unionist activity in sympathy with us, and we know that they are increasing every day. It does not become us when we are putting on our armour to boast as he who putteth it off ; but when the general election comes—it will not come just yet (cheers)—we will try to give Sir William Harcourt good reason for our existence, and we will show him that we have some influence and power in the land. (Cheers.)

#### AMERICAN OPINION.

Before referring, as with your permission I hope to do, to the general political situation, there is a personal matter on which I should like to say a word or two. When I returned from the United States I was very much amused and a little surprised at a statement which appeared in the London correspondence of several Gladstonian journals, to the effect that my experience in the United States had wrought a great change in my convictions on the Irish question—(laughter)—and that if I had not actually found salvation, at all events I was in the way of grace. (Laughter and cheers.) That statement was not only inaccurate, but it betrayed astonishing ignorance of the state of opinion in that part of the civilized world which we call the

United States of America, and of the practice of those who inhabit that part of the world. I had very considerable opportunities of ascertaining the drift of opinion during my stay there. I mixed with representative men of all parties, of all classes, and of the different nationalities of which the people of the United States is composed; and, with very few exceptions, I could find hardly any one who approved of the policy of Mr. Gladstone or of the Bills that he introduced. (Hear, hear.) The small minority who did profess approval of the policy and of those Bills I always found, on inquiry, to be insufficiently informed as to their nature and character; in fact, the American people, the intelligent portion of the American people, who have given attention to this subject, are, perhaps unconsciously, almost to a man Radical and Liberal Unionists. (Cheers.) That is to say, they are in favour of the largest possible extension of self-government but are altogether opposed to any policy that does lead, or can by any possibility lead, in the direction of the disintegration of a great Empire. (Cheers.) The Americans very naturally set before themselves as the type and model of a perfect and satisfactory representative government their own system, and especially their system of State rights; but they are altogether opposed to any policy which would make the States independent of the Federal authority, and they would repudiate with contempt any proposals which would deprive the inhabitants of these States of representation in the Central and Federal Congress—(hear, hear)—and even in this matter of State rights the Americans, who are a practical people, make very important exceptions. (Cheers.)

#### AMERICAN PRACTICE.

They do not grant them to people who they think will be likely to abuse them. (Hear, hear.) For many years past they have absolutely refused to grant State rights to the Territory of Utah. (Laughter.) Now, the analogy of Utah is a very interesting and a very instructive one. (Renewed laughter.) The great majority of the people of Utah are polygamists, and polygamy is forbidden by the laws of the United States. They come forward and ask for a constitution which would give them greater powers of self-government, profess their willingness to insert in that constitution pro-

visions making polygamy illegal, and yet the United States Congress refuse to make Utah a State; and they do so because they say that if once State rights were conceded to Utah the majority would ignore the paper constitution, and that there would be no power short of civil war to insure that the laws of the Federal authority should be observed. But the United States do not stop short there. Not only do they refuse Home Rule to Utah, but they have passed in regard to Utah a strong Coercion Bill. (Laughter.) They have restricted and limited in the Territory of Utah the system of trial by jury, so far as the particular question at issue is involved; they have reserved to themselves the entire control of the military and of the judiciary, and they will continue to reserve it to the end until they are assured that additional liberty will not be followed by abuse and that the laws of the Federal authority will in any case be faithfully observed. (Cheers.) There is another case which is also interesting, the course taken in regard to the Southern States after the Civil War. Congress refused to restore to them their political rights until it was perfectly certain that all idea of, and even all desire for resistance had disappeared. I want you to apply these illustrations to the case of Ireland. In Ireland there is a majority which is much less than is proportionately the majority in Utah or the majority in the Southern States of America, and this majority is hostile to the central authority, and avowedly, if it had the power, would confiscate the property of the minority. (Hear, hear.) The opposition to the law in Ireland is of course, not the same kind as that which the United States authority fears in the case of Utah, but it is equally a breach of the law. (Hear, hear.) The polygamists of Utah can at least contend that they have, or that they think they have, the Divine authority in the Old Testament for the breach of human law which they advocate. But the National League in Ireland have no authority, either human or Divine—(cheers)—for a policy which was rightly described some time ago as a policy of public plunder—(cheers)—and for methods, which were described by the same authority, as methods of crime and outrage. Believe me that if the American democracy had to deal with this Irish question they would make short work of these monstrous pretensions, and that they would not allow the sacred name of liberty to be prostituted for purposes of anarchy and crime. (Cheers.)

## DEMOCRACY AND LAW.

There was another thing that struck me very much in America, and that was the universal respect and reverence for the law of the land. (Hear, hear.) The Americans allow no sentimental considerations whatever to stand in the way of the law that has been made by the majority of the country through their constitutional representatives. (Cheers.) I had a curious illustration of it. While I was at Washington one day my newspaper brought me word that the Lord Mayor of Dublin had been imprisoned, on a charge of publishing in his newspaper the proceedings of the proclaimed League. I remember there was a sensational heading to this news which evidently came from an Irish source. It was described as "Another of Balfour's Outrages". (Laughter.) "Poet, Patriot, and Martyr." (Laughter.) I confess I was not touched by the reference to the poet or to the martyr, but having been a mayor myself, I was shocked—(laughter) at the idea of the head of a great municipal organization going to prison, even as a first-class misdemeanant. But conceive my feelings when, in the next column to that in which this news was transmitted—far from being an extraordinary telegram it might have been a quotation of stocks, so little importance appeared to be given to it—I saw it stated that the Mayor and the whole of the Town Council of the important city of Lincoln, the chief town of the State of Nebraska, were in gaol for contempt of court on the order of a local Judge. ("Oh," and laughter.) There is one fact which our Gladstonian friends would do well to bear in mind, and that is that the more democratic the people are the more determined they are the law shall be respected, until it is altered by constitutional methods. (Cheers.)

## A DISORGANIZED PARTY.

But if my American experience did not tempt me to follow the example of Sir George Trevelyan and to recant all my former convictions, I can assure you that still less am I tempted now that I have returned home and see the position of the Unionists of this country. Never, in my opinion, has our position been stronger; never has it been more firmly established. (Cheers.) For the first time since the passing of the Crimes Act I would be willing, without the slightest

hesitation, to appeal to the country in the certainty that we should go back with a majority as great or greater than that we now possess. (Cheers.) What are the reasons for this? In my opinion there are two. The first reason is to be found in the gradual and progressive deterioration and disorganisation of the Gladstonian section. (Hear, hear.) Why, at the present moment they are a house divided against itself. Their quarrels are so loud that they have echoed altogether outside the sacred precincts of their secret councils. (Laughter.) One section of the party is rebellious and insubordinate, and another section is half-hearted and depressed. (Laughter.) How can it be otherwise? Three-fourths of these men at the very least changed their convictions the other day by word of command. Is it possible that you can make out of such materials the "saints and martyrs" that are required to sustain a failing cause? (Laughter.) It is true that there is another section whose motives we may sympathise with, although, of course, we cannot agree with them. They are the men who sacrifice their own preferences and their own convictions out of loyalty to a leader whom they have honoured and respected for many years; out of devotion to a party that they still believe to be the most potent instrument of progress and reform. Where has their mistake landed them? They now find themselves dragged at the heels of the O'Briens and the Laboucheres—(hear, hear)—and the Cunninghame Grahams, and they do not know that to-morrow they may not be even carried to a lower depth. (Laughter.) They find themselves in the meantime tacitly approving of the Plan of Campaign and sympathising with the rioters in Trafalgar-square. Well, it is quite impossible that these men can long maintain such a position, and there is no wonder that with such discordant elements the party is powerless and almost ridiculous. (Laughter.)

#### THE UNIONIST ALLIANCE AT WORK.

But there is another reason besides the weakness of our opponents for the increasing strength of our position, and that is that the alliance with the Conservatives is stronger, firmer, and more permanent in its character than it ever has been before. (Cheers.) In 1886 the Unionist party were at a very great disadvantage. We were brought together with our former enemies by a common danger. It

was natural that there should be a certain amount of distrust between those who had been life-long opponents. But in the time that has elapsed much of this distrust has disappeared. (Hear, hear.) The results of the alliance have been made manifest ; its effect upon both parties has been seen, and the results of the alliance have been approved by both parties and have been satisfactory to the country ; and so it happens that an increased feeling of confidence has been produced, and there has arisen a real sense of the advantages of this alliance and a determination to maintain it. (Cheers.) That will outlive the temporary madness of a portion of the former Liberal party. (Cheers.) Now, let us consider briefly the results of this alliance. What has been already achieved ? In the first place, the foreign policy of the Government has been eminently satisfactory and eminently successful. We have kept out of little wars and the burdens they entail upon the taxpayer. And all this has been accomplished without loss of influence either in the colonies or in the councils of Europe. The influence of great Britain was never greater than it is at the present time, and it has been used skilfully and patriotically in order to maintain the peace. (Cheers.) So much is admitted by the strongest opponents of the Government. I am not saying this on my own authority ; I am saying it on the authority of Sir William Harcourt. (Laughter.) In the speech to which I have already referred, he went through the various points of the Government policy with great approval. " But " he said, " this policy is our policy. They have borrowed it from Mr. Gladstone and the previous Government." Well, I suppose if Lord Salisbury were now addressing you he might have something to say upon this point. He might say, for instance, that if the policy is the same the results are marvellously different. (Cheers.) I shall say nothing except that I accept Sir William Harcourt's position, and that I ask you to take note of the admission that he makes and to which I shall return in a moment or two. But, then, what has been effected in regard to home policy ? In finance undoubtedly the Government have gained a success as striking as in their foreign policy. The skill and ability with which Mr. Goschen has carried out his great scheme for the conversion of the National Debt have been the admiration even of the most reluctant critics. We have returned, to our great surprise and gratification, to the period of superabundant revenue and dis-

posable surplus. The taxpayers, at any rate, have every reason to be content. Meantime domestic legislation in England and Scotland, as well as in Ireland, is once more proceeding with steady strides. Last Session the miners of the United Kingdom, the agricultural labourers, and the Irish tenants all received a substantial measure of relief. What has been the result in Ireland? You see that in consequence of this legislation and of the firm administration of the law, although no peaceable and industrious citizen is interfered with in the slightest degree, yet peace and prosperity and order are slowly returning to that distracted country; and in England people are awakening to the fact that all progress need not necessarily be stayed because a few agitators, subsidised by money received from their countrymen in America, attack the unity of the Empire and strive to keep the whole kingdom in hot water. (Cheers.) And this awakening will be quickened by the introduction of the Local Government Bill this Session—a Bill which is broad and generous and comprehensive and democratic, and of which any Liberal Minister might be proud. Again I am going to call Sir William Harcourt as a witness. What does he say about it? He says “The Tory leaders have propounded a new and strange policy utterly alien to the traditions of the Tories, and the masses of their party have had the good sense to accept it with alacrity, and they have been wise to do so”. Well, there again I suppose if Lord Salisbury were in my place he might have something to say, but for my part I gratefully note the admission which Sir William Harcourt makes that the policy we are supporting is at all events not a Tory policy. It is a democratic and a Liberal policy. (Cheers.)

#### LIBERALISM OR PARNELLISM?

And now see what we have come to. According to Sir William Harcourt, one of the most influential leaders of the Gladstonian section, the policy of the Unionist party is in its foreign policy a Liberal one, and in its home policy a democratic one. I should like to ask Sir William Harcourt under these circumstances how it is that he and his followers—(laughter)—how it is that they who still call themselves Liberals do not support a policy which by their own confession is Liberal and democratic. Why, on the contrary, do they do everything in their power, as they did last Session with regard to



the Allotments Act and to other beneficial measures, as they are doing now in regard to the Local Government Bill; why do they do everything in their power to obstruct and defeat this beneficial policy? I am afraid that Sir William Harcourt will not find it convenient to answer in public, and therefore I will tell him. It is because the Liberalism of these men has been absorbed in their Parnellism. (Cheers.) I say it is coming to this; a large section of the old Liberal party are now ready to oppose Liberal measures in the hope that by that course they can force the country to adopt the Home Rule policy to which they have committed themselves. Their attitude enables us to appreciate the situation. The old party lines have entirely disappeared. (Hear, hear.) We have no longer to deal with Liberals and Tories. (Hear, hear.) We have to deal with Unionists on the one hand—(cheers)—and Parnellites on the other. (Cheers.) This is a great fact which the country is beginning to appreciate. We may, if we like, recall the old party names; they no longer represent the old party ideas. (Hear, hear.) The Tory party is not what it was. (Laughter.) The Liberal party—where is that party now? (Loud laughter and cheers.) A common danger has united all of us against a common foe—(cheers)—against the men who advocate illegality and who are willing to go all lengths, even to those of crime and outrage; and, as a result of this, a National party has at last been brought into existence. (Cheers.) It will draw to itself all those who set national interests and national honour above party and personal matters. (Cheers.) A future historian may yet write of the bitter controversy which has divided us, that its evils have cheaply purchased the knowledge that the great majority of the British nation are proud of the Empire, the glorious and united Empire, to which they belong. (Cheers.) They are sensible of the responsibilities which its citizenship entails and of the privileges which it confers, and they will never be either tempted or bullied into their surrender. (Loud cheers.)

*BIRMINGHAM, May 28, 1888.*

## A UNIONIST POLICY FOR IRELAND.

BIRMINGHAM LIBERAL UNIONIST ASSOCIATION, MAY 28, 1888.

[On May 28th, 1888, the first meeting of the grand committee of the newly-formed Liberal Unionist Association of Birmingham, was held in the Town Hall. Mr. Chamberlain was elected President of the Association.]

- MR. CHAMBERLAIN said :—Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very sincerely for the honour you have just done me. I hope I may be permitted to say to my friends Mr. Smith and Mr. Jenkyn Brown how much I have been gratified by their kind allusions to myself. I am proud to be the president of this great association—(hear, hear)—representative in the truest and the best sense of the well-tryed Liberalism and Radicalism of Birmingham. (Cheers.) Like Mr. Dixon, I also regret that this new departure should have been forced upon us; but it became probable three years ago, when the great leader of the Liberal party, at a few weeks' notice, turned his back upon all his old professions and on the principles that he had advocated during the greater part of his life, and surrendered to a faction whose policy he had denounced in eloquent language. And it became inevitable when the local minority that form his followers in this town, not content with the position which they held, and which was altogether beyond anything either their just influence or their numbers could claim, destroyed the representative character of the old Liberal Association—(hear, hear)—turned it into a Home Rule caucus, and shattered that great instrument of Liberal progress. (Cheers.) I cannot help thinking that they must already be inclined to regret their action. The shadow and the name is theirs; but the substance is ours. (Loud cheers.) As Mr. Brown has told you, here are all the men who have made the name of the Liberal Association famous. Here is the working Liberalism of Birmingham,

here are the men who have given time and labour and unselfish devotion to the Liberal cause. I am taunted sometimes with having deserted my friends. Where are the friends that I have deserted? (Cheers.) I do not miss them in this hall. (Cheers.) And, gentlemen, your place on the Liberal Association will be ill supplied by the new allies, whose more or less disinterested services, and whose more or less sober judgment—(laughter)—the leaders of the Home Rule party enlisted on the occasion of the late election of the committee of the Two Thousand. Now, in future, I suppose, we have to reckon with three political organisations in Birmingham; but at present I know of only two parties. One is the National and the Unionist party, and the other is the Gladstonian or Home Rule party. This is a great issue, and as long as this issue remains all others are minor considerations.

#### GLADSTONIAN PROMISES AND UNIONIST PERFORMANCE.

Mr. Gladstone has called attention to the change which has come over the policy of what he called the Conservative Government, but what I prefer to call the Unionist Government. (Cheers.) I have often pointed out to you before that with the extension of the franchise and the spread of democratic ideas the old Toryism has died out. There may be still a few representatives of it, but I do not know who they are—(laughter)—and, at all events, their views have found no exponents in the present Government, and one consequence is that while the present Government and their supporters are agreed with us in preserving the union of the country, they are no less anxious than we are to promote all reasonable and safe reforms. (Cheers.) I am quite prepared to admit that the Government does not go far enough for me, but I have never found a Government yet that did. (Laughter and applause.) They go a good deal further than the last Government did, and they go a good deal further than I had any idea that either Mr. Gladstone, or any of his principal supporters, would go, until they began to bid for votes, and to fish for them with every imaginable bait. They are quite willing according to their recent speeches, to support the extremest views—the Unauthorised Programme is nothing to them. (Laughter.) They are ready to outbid it, although three years ago they thought it most dangerous,

most inopportune, and most ill-advised. (Laughter.) But while they give these pledges, which in themselves would be satisfactory to me, some of which, however, go further perhaps, than anything I should desire, I am unable to place confidence in their promises. (Hear, hear.) I know perfectly well, and you know, that if by these means they were to obtain power again to-morrow, all these pledges and promises would be cast to the winds, and that once more we should be embarked in a great project of constitutional change which I believe would endanger the best interests of the country, and certainly land us in an almost endless controversy, accompanied by violence, and probably by civil strife. (Hear, hear.) Well, as a practical man, I confess I prefer a bird in the hand to two in the bush. I prefer the extension of local government in England, which it has been one of the objects of my political life to obtain—(cheers)—I prefer consideration of the interests of the agricultural labourers, the safety of the miners, some provision for the distressed crofters in Scotland, commercial reforms for which people have long been waiting—I prefer these changes, these practical reforms, all of which I believe we are in the way of getting from the present Government—to the prospect of this great political revolution to which Mr. Gladstone invites us. (Cheers.)

#### THE UNIONIST ALLIANCE.

And as long as this is the issue, for my part, like my friend Mr. Dixon, I am altogether indifferent to the taunts which Mr. Gladstone continually addresses to us for what he calls our alliance with the Tories. I think that those with whom we are allied have ceased to be Tories, as I think that those with whom we were allied have ceased to be Liberals. (Cheers.) At the present moment a common danger unites us, and we are facing a common foe. In political life I have always understood—I have experienced the fact—that compromise and concession are necessary. But if I am to choose, I prefer a compromise which does not endanger the interests of my country, and which is justified by the results, to one which would, in my opinion, lead to disaster, and which would tarnish the honour of the nation. (Cheers.) And if I am to make concessions, I would rather make them to men who at all events are animated, as I hope

I am myself, by patriotic aspirations—(cheers)—who are proud of the greatness of the United Kingdom, rather than to the men who are the promoters of disorder everywhere—(hear, hear)—the propounders of the Plan of Campaign, the instigators of the riots in Trafalgar Square—(cheers)—and the enemies of England in all parts of the world. (Cheers.) Now, gentlemen, it appears to me that the same principles and the same considerations apply to local politics as well as to Imperial politics. Here, also, we have seen a considerable change in the policy of the Conservatives, caused by the altered circumstances of the case; we find the Conservatives of Birmingham ready to join with us to maintain the integrity of the country; we find them now willing also to work with us in maintaining that great municipal programme which has done so much for the appearance of our town, for the welfare, and for the comfort, and for the happiness of the great majority of its population. (Cheers.) There is no longer any fear that the election of a few Conservatives to the Town Council would cause the work to slacken or to be stopped. And under these circumstances I hold it to be our duty at all times to sink all minor considerations and all minor differences, and to join with any or with all who will help us to save the country and to save the town from the disastrous consequences of the doctrines of disorder, and anarchy, and division, which are now preached openly among us.

#### IRELAND MUST NOT BLOCK THE WAY.

Gentlemen, what I want specially to impress upon you is the fact, which must be patent to every reasonable and intelligent man, that the Unionist policy which we are called upon to support, although it may not go so far as many of us would wish to go, is still not in any sense a stationary, and above all is not a reactionary, policy. We are not sacrificing any principles by supporting it. We should only sacrifice principles if we accepted the doctrines which the Gladstonian Liberals have taken from their Parnellite leaders. We are prepared to resist revolution, but we are still ready to welcome reform, and the alliance has already produced great results, greater in the shape of domestic reform than we can count for some years past. It was understood with general assent—I think I may say with the almost universal approval of the great

bulk of the nation—that the present session in Parliament should be an English and a Scotch session, and that it should not be devoted wholly, as past sessions had been, to the consideration of Irish affairs. It appears to me that in the clash of contending parties we are sometimes apt to forget what has been done for Ireland. We speak of the grievances of Ireland as though the Ireland with which we have to deal were the Ireland of Wolfe Tone or the Ireland of O'Connell, or even the Ireland of Mr. Butt; but the fact is that all the grievances against which these great previous leaders of Irish agitation protested have been removed; that more has been done for the Irish people than even they or any of them ventured to ask for—(hear, hear); that more has been done in late years than has been done in all the years before; and that the greatest remedial measure of all was passed in the last session of Parliament under this Government, which is denounced as Conservative, and reactionary, and brutal, and oppressive, but which has yet placed the Irish tenant in a position which is more favourable than that of any agricultural tenant on the whole face of the globe. Now, I say, under these circumstances surely we are justified in insisting that the English peasant and the Scottish tenant should also have their turn—(hear, hear)—and that the artisans of our great towns, the industrious law-abiding population of the working classes, should also have their fair share of the attention of Parliament. I think that we should be foolish indeed, we should be altogether unjust to our constituents, if we permitted this Irish question again to absorb the whole energies and the whole attention of Parliament. But while I say that, I am not so foolish as to imagine that it is desirable, even if it were possible, that Ireland should be altogether excluded from consideration.

#### MR. GLADSTONE'S FOUR POLICIES.

No, gentlemen, the Irish question is still unsettled. Three times within our recollection a great policy has been introduced and recommended by Mr. Gladstone with this special object, and we have been assured that if only we would give it a favourable reception all our difficulties in that country would vanish. On two separate occasions the policy has been tried, and, unfortunately, it has failed. On the third occasion the prescription was rejected, and it is now

withdrawn by the great physician, who tells us, however, that he has a fourth specific in his pharmacopœia, although he absolutely refuses to disclose the ingredients. (Laughter.) Well, I confess I am very sorry that Mr. Gladstone should preserve this policy of mystery. I regret that for tactical and for strategical reasons he should refuse to take the people of England into his confidence. (Hear, hear.) I thought it was part of the Liberal creed to trust the people. (Cheers.) The new Liberal doctrine is to trick them. (Laughter and cheers.) If Mr. Gladstone would open his hand, if he would show what he has got under his hat—(laughter)—we might perhaps all be able to agree with him, and I am sure none would be more delighted than the Liberal Unionists and the Radical Unionists. (Hear, hear.) But he appears to rely upon the readiness of his faithful followers to accept without consideration anything which, at what he considers the proper time, he may propose to them as his future policy. (Shame.) I regret it, because I think that this concealment is unfair to the country—(hear, hear)—unfair to his opponents, and I would say also unfair to his followers, although they seem to be perfectly satisfied. (Laughter.) But I regret it also because I think that the present is a good time for the careful and impartial consideration of this great problem with which, after all, English statesmen will have to deal.

#### THE TRIUMPH OF THE GOVERNMENT.

Whatever the Home Rulers may say, however they may boast themselves—however loudly they may whistle to keep up their spirits—(laughter)—they know perfectly well that the game of disorder is, for the time at all events, “up” in Ireland. (Cheers.) Their policy has been openly avowed. They told us frankly that they intended to make government impossible in Ireland, and the Government has beaten them. They tried to keep up the agitation by a policy which Mr. Gladstone himself described a year or two ago as a policy of public plunder, and they supported and maintained this policy by wholesale intimidation and violence. They forced the Government to introduce the Crimes Act, which no doubt was one of their objects; and having done so, they trusted that the English democracy, in its dislike of all coercion, would consent even to the abrogation of law. Well, gentlemen, they have mistaken the temper of the English

democracy. (Hear, hear.) The democracy may be in favour of liberty—I hope and I believe it always will be—but it is not in favour of license—(hear, hear)—and the result has been that their agitation against the Crimes Act has been a failure, and that the Crimes Act itself has been successful, and practically the resistance to law has been put an end to, at all events for a time. And now, when the triumph of the Government has been assured, we find Mr. Parnell at the Eighty Club repudiating the Plan of Campaign; we find Mr. Gladstone vaguely disapproving of it; and we find this iniquitous policy, together with the equally scandalous boycotting by which it was supported, denounced emphatically by the Church to which the majority of Irishmen owe allegiance. (Cheers.) I am glad that that condemnation has come at last although it only follows the condemnation which was passed upon this policy months—I might say almost years—ago by every honest man. (Cheers.) Under these circumstances we have, I think, some reason to hope that the great majority of the people of Ireland will return to honest industry, and that they will seek to appropriate the great benefits of the legislation which has been passed for their advantage; and we have, therefore, a breathing space before us, of which, I hold, that we ought to take advantage. I hold it to be the duty of English statesmen to seek and to find a solution of this question which has been before us now for generations, and which will rise again at no distant date, if we do not find the means of laying this spectre.

#### A UNIONIST POLICY FOR IRELAND.

I am glad, therefore, that within the last few days a great provincial organ in this town, the *Daily Post*—(cheers)—has opened its columns to the discussion of the question. I should like, in dealing with the subject which they have raised, to point out to you, in the first place, that the matter is brought before you for discussion; that it is not presented as a cut and dried policy which has to be accepted under fear of ulterior consequences. Every Unionist, whether Liberal or Conservative, must be anxious to escape this labyrinth of Irish disaffection, but there is no pretension put forward, as far as I can see, in the articles to which I am referring—there is no pretension on the part of anyone to force this policy either on the Government



or upon any section of the Unionist party. All that anyone is entitled to ask is that the opportunity shall be taken to discuss the whole matter with an unprejudiced mind, in order that hereafter we may not be taken unprepared, and that we may not be asked to accept a policy which has not been fully considered. (Cheers.) In the second place, I would say that this policy which has rather fluttered the dovescotes in some quarters—(laughter)—is not, as has been represented, in any sense a new departure, but so far as the general principles and the main lines go, there is nothing in this policy which has been presented to you which I for one would not have been willing to accept any time within the last ten years—(cheers)—and I very much doubt, if I live to be twenty years older, whether I shall be willing to accept anything more. But what is of still greater importance, if you will read these suggestions carefully you will find that many of them are based upon indications which have been given by other Unionist leaders—by Lord Hartington—(cheers)—by Sir Michael Hicks Beach, by Sir Henry James, and by Lord Randolph Churchill. (Cheers.) And although I do not suppose for a moment that either of these would accept as a whole or in its entirety the scheme which has been put forward, yet it is clear to me that the writer of the article has collected these suggestions, not invented them, and that he has put them together as a complete whole for the consideration of the country, and especially of the Unionist party.

#### STATE AID FOR PUBLIC WORKS.

Now let us look at the suggestions themselves. There are three cardinal considerations which underlie them, and which I desire to impress upon your attention. In the first place, that the root of the difficulty in Ireland is to be found in economic and agrarian questions: that is a point which you ought never to lose sight of. Ireland is a very poor country; the great majority of its population have for generations been engaged in a struggle for existence. Is it wonderful that discontent should be rife, and is it not certain that if you can do anything to make that struggle for existence less bitter and more hopeful, you will do more for the pacification of Ireland than by any political scheme or any constitutional change? (Cheers.) And hence

it is, gentlemen, that a prominent place is given in this scheme to the development of the material interests of Ireland, to the promotion of its communications, of its fisheries, of its harbours, and of its public works generally. I see it is said that any scheme of this kind would be imprudent and contrary to the principles that have been adopted in England. But then, gentlemen, you must bear in mind that England is a very rich country, and that in consequence of its riches it has been able to do what no other country in the world has succeeded in accomplishing. England is the only country in the world whose public works have been carried on without public assistance. In America, on the continent of Europe, in all our self-governing colonies, public works have been maintained or aided by the assistance of the State. Now, I have always held that the union between England and Ireland was beneficial to Ireland, because it would offer all the advantages which the capital and assistance of a rich country could give to a poor one : but it would be, in my opinion, most unfair to Ireland if you were to say to her that because of her position in connection with this country she was to be deprived of the stimulus to her public works which otherwise would certainly be given to her if she were independent. It seems to me that if we are to preserve the Union we ought to treat Ireland at least as generously as any Home Rule Parliament would treat her. (Cheers.) It is not an unreasonable demand which she makes. I have stated that every other country in the world has had to have recourse to State assistance. Take our own homely illustration. Where would you be in Birmingham but for corporate aid? How many of the great improvements of which we are all proud, improvements in our streets, our parks, our libraries, our museums ; how many of these great investments of the people of Birmingham would ever have seen the light but for corporate aid and corporate assistance? (Hear, hear.) I believe that the investment of public money in Irish public works could be shown to be profitable. If I had time I believe I could prove to you that at least there was as good a prospect for it as there was in Birmingham when, years ago, we undertook the control and management and acquisition of the gas and water works. (Cheers.) What is wanted, gentlemen, is an improvement scheme for Ireland—(cheers)—conducted by national resources, as we had an improvement scheme in Birmingham, conducted by local resources. (Cheers.) And if

this were done, I am convinced that we should cut from under the feet of the agitators one of the great grounds of grievance which they have against the British connection, and that we should give a great impetus to employment and enterprise in that country, which would react favourably upon the political situation. (Cheers.)

#### A SCHEME OF LAND PURCHASE BY IRISH CREDIT.

Well, then, the second proposal which is offered to us is one for the settlement of the land question. Hitherto we have trifled with the question; we have only scratched on the surface; we have never dealt with it thoroughly and radically. And we shall never have done so until we have transformed the great majority of the occupiers of land into the owners of the soil they till. (Cheers.) Now I think that everyone, men of all parties, are agreed that this is a desirable object; they are agreed that it ought to be attained. Mr. Gladstone put it foremost in his latest scheme for the settlement of the Irish difficulty, and Mr. Morley has never ceased to declare that the settlement of the land question, in his opinion, ought to be made to precede, or to be concurrent with, the settlement of the Home Rule question. Well but then there is almost an equal agreement that this great object, desirable as it is, must not be secured at the expense or at the risk of the British taxpayer. (Hear, hear.) I do not think that that is a question which is worth arguing. The only people who hold a different opinion, so far as I have been able to see, are the landlords of Ireland. (Laughter and cheers.) And, although I do not want to confiscate their property, I do not intend, if I can help it, that they shall confiscate yours or mine. (Cheers.) Now, the proposal in the *Daily Post* is that this great object, which, as I say, everybody agrees to be desirable, shall be carried out by Irish credit and Irish resources. I think it would be wise for those who have criticised this scheme to wait until it is fully explained. It is evident from what I have seen that they have not up to the present time completely understood it. I take it that the proposal professes to give to the Irish landlord an unimpeachable security for the capital value of his land, and at the same time it proposes to base that security upon Irish resources, and not upon British resources. Now, without entering upon details at this moment, all I will say to you is

that if this can be done—if this be feasible, if it can be shown hereafter that it can be worked out in a practical way—the question of the land may be considered as solved—(hear, hear)—and I would advise the Gladstonian organs not to be too prompt in declaring it to be impossible, or else they may have to swallow their words once more. (Laughter and cheers.) I would invite them to read a speech which was delivered, I think, at Mr. Barran's house, but which, at all events, was delivered by Mr. Gladstone, and in which he said that since the introduction of his own Land Bill—which he admitted was now withdrawn—he had further considered the subject, and he had come to the conclusion that it would be possible to buy out the Irish landlords without having recourse to British credit. Of course I do not know what his scheme is, nor whether it is the same scheme as that in the *Daily Post*, but at all events I think the Gladstonian papers will feel that it would be premature to declare that the thing itself is impossible, when their great prophet has already assured them that he can do it if they will give him the opportunity. (Cheers.)

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Well then, gentlemen, we come to the third and last branch of the subject, the question of local government. Now I have always held, and I think it must be evident, that if the land question were settled, the difficulties attending local government would almost entirely vanish. What is now unsafe, what is now difficult, what is now impossible would then become perfectly natural and reasonable. You have only to ask yourselves what would be your view, supposing it were proposed to give local government to Scotland. I imagine that you would be prepared, as I should be, to give to the people of Scotland almost anything that they might wish to have. We are so confident that they would not abuse the powers—(cheers)—which would be conceded to them, we are so confident of their loyalty, of their devotion to the Union and to the British Crown, and we are so confident of their high sense of honesty and morality that we feel assured they would not do injustice to a minority, however small. If we could introduce the same state of things in Ireland we should have the same feeling about local government in Ireland that we now have about local government in Scotland. If we could do away with

the perpetual conflict which has lasted for I know not how long between the minority of landlords and the majority of tenants, if we could take away the interest which the tenants unfortunately have in the confiscation of the property of their landlords, in that case we should have removed the great cause of irritation and danger, and then our path would be smooth, and we should find very little difficulty in dealing with local government in so liberal and generous a measure that every reasonable and patriotic man would be amply satisfied. (Cheers.) When Irishmen have common rights and common obligations as citizens, we may expect that they will perform their civic duties. At present, unfortunately, their interests are against the performance of their legal obligations, and their virtue is not proof against the temptation to transfer the property of others into their own pockets. But you will see—and this is the second cardinal point in the scheme which I am considering—that the settlement of the land question must precede the reform of local government. It would not be safe to extend local government in Ireland until we have dealt finally and satisfactorily with the land question. (“Hear, hear,” and cheers.) When we have done that, I do not think there would be much difference of opinion as to the extent of the liberties we might grant to Ireland—as to the extent to which she might be permitted, under the authority of the Imperial Parliament, to control her local and domestic business. There may be at this moment some divergence as to the exact form which this local government should take—whether county boards should be supplemented by provincial councils, or in what way we should deal with those interests which extend beyond the county, and which are in some sort national in their nature.

#### THE REAL ISSUE.

But—and this is the last point which I want to impress upon you—the difference between the scheme which is put before you in the *Daily Post* and any scheme which has hitherto had the sanction of Mr. Gladstone is this—that the former does not recognise, and for my part I never will recognise, a separate political nationality in Ireland. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I beg you to bear this distinction in mind. If you ever are willing to recognise the political nation-

ality of Ireland—I do not speak of the sentimental nationality—but if you are willing to accept the political nationality of Ireland, you must accept all the logical consequences of that admission. (Hear, hear.) You must give to Ireland all the prerogatives of a separate nation; you must give to it a separate Parliament, as Mr. Gladstone proposes; you must give to it a separate executive, as Mr. Gladstone proposes. But you must give to it more than Mr. Gladstone proposes. You must give to it a separate church, and separate customs, and a separate army; and be sure of this, that if you take the first step you will not be able to refuse to take the succeeding one. (Hear, hear.) It was this, in my mind, which constituted a fatal objection to Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill; and it is by this we ought to be prepared to test any further proposals which he may make at any future time. Now, gentlemen, I do not propose to-night to enter more in detail upon the scheme which has been submitted to us.

#### ONCE BITTEN TWICE SHY.

But I would say to the Gladstonian Liberals that it is not enough for them to criticise this scheme or to disapprove of it; they must tell us what they would substitute for it. (Cheers.) It is no use saying that they are afraid of falling into a trap. We have shown, at all events, that we have more courage than they. We have put forward for discussion—although not necessarily for acceptance—we have put forward for discussion and criticism our plan. It may not be a good one; let them show that they have a better. (Cheers.) Till they do that we must conclude that they have no plan but the old one; we must conclude that they intend once more, if they can, to surprise the people of this country, and to carry by a rush what they know they could never gain from their sober judgment. (Cheers.) I remember a good number of years ago Mr. Miall, who was then the leader of Nonconformity, telling Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons that there was a proverb, "Once bitten twice shy". That proverb is applicable to the present occasion also, and I do not believe the people of this country will lend themselves again to the concealment which has already so nearly had such disastrous results. (Cheers.) We ask for a declaration of policy from the man who claims to be the leader of the Liberal party; we ask that he shall

not attempt to get into power upon side issues, while he refuses to tell us what is his programme in reference to the greatest question of all, the one which will absorb all others, when we give him our votes. Gentlemen, I ask, then, from the Gladstonian Liberals that they shall be constructive as well as destructive: (Hear, hear.) Let them show, if they like, that we do not know our business, that the wise men of Birmingham have no plan of Irish policy which can be considered for a moment; let them take pity upon our ignorance, and let them show us at the same time what better things they have in store for us. (Cheers.) Then, gentlemen, on the Unionist party, whether they be Liberal or Conservative, I would respectfully urge that they shall take advantage of the respite which the firm action of the Government has given to us in order to consider all the conditions of this problem without prejudice, with fairness, and with full opportunity; and that they shall endeavour to see if it be not possible to satisfy every reasonable demand of patriotic Irishmen, to remove every ascertained Irish grievance, without impairing the authority of the Imperial Parliament, without endangering the security of the commonwealth of Great Britain and Ireland, which is the keystone and the centre of the mighty fabric of the empire that recognises the sway and authority of the Queen. (Loud cheers.)

*BRADFORD, September 19th, 1888.*

## A POLITICAL AND AGRARIAN REVOLUTION.

[On September 19th, 1888, Mr. Chamberlain addressed a mass meeting in the St. Andrew's Hall, Bradford—about 5000 people being present. In response to a resolution welcoming him to Bradford, and expressing the meeting's high appreciation of the services of the Liberal Unionist Leaders, Mr. Chamberlain said:—]

I THANK you very much, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, for the resolution which you have just passed by such an overwhelming majority. (Cheers.) In these times, which are times of great anxiety, we are more than gratified—we are encouraged—by the assurance of your support and sympathy. Mr. Mitchell, in the very useful speech which he made to-night, reminded you of the last occasion upon which I had the honour of addressing a Bradford audience. I remember the circumstances very well. (Cheers.) On that occasion I had to lament the serious illness of your late member, Mr. Forster—(loud cheers)—who had recently been struck down in the middle of his career. Unfortunately, that illness had a fatal termination a few months later, and Mr. Forster was called home to join the great majority, and his place knows him no more. Upon several questions of great importance I differed from Mr. Forster—(hear, hear)—and opposed his policy; but in the course of those differences, and the controversies which ensued, I had plenty of reason to appreciate the courage, and the persistence, and the resolution of the man, and the true honesty of purpose which dictated his work—(hear, hear)—and which we like to think is characteristic of Englishmen. (Cheers.) You know that recently the "Life" of Mr. Forster has been published, and I daresay many of you have read it, as I have, with interest and pleasure. But the portion of that life which has interested me most is that part in which those of his relatives and friends who knew him best, and loved him most, give an account of the last months of his life, because then all minor considerations having sunk



out of sight in the shadow of the great impending change, the true man was seen. We are able to appreciate the tenderness that was behind a rugged exterior, and the devotion and the patriotism, which, perhaps, a certain reserve and shyness may have concealed before from his ordinary associates ; but I notice that, in all this time, the one thought which was prevailing in Mr. Forster's mind, and which was his supreme consolation, was expressed by him when he said, " I have tried to serve my country ". (Hear, hear.) What better epitaph can any English statesman have than that? (Hear, hear.) What greater claim to the grateful recollection of his fellow-countrymen ?

#### A RETROSPECT.

Since Mr. Forster's death, there has been a great crisis in our political history, which he was not spared fully to appreciate, and of the imminence of which, I will admit, I had not the slightest conception at the time I last stood on this platform. Then I was speaking as an advanced but a very loyal member of the Liberal party—(cheers)—and I was endeavouring to promote the success of that party at the impending general election, and to pave the way for the reforms to which, I believed, it would in the first place and immediately devote its attention. Alas for the vanity of human expectations ! (Laughter.) In four months from that time the Liberal party was divided from top to bottom, the reforms which we were advocating had been put on the shelf, the authorised programme had gone with the unauthorised programme to keep it company—(laughter)—and we were plunged in a constitutional discussion, in which we are still engaged down to this time. Well, it has fallen to my lot to be the first to open the political discussion of this autumn. It falls to my lot to call your attention once more to the causes of this great disruption, to the causes which led to it, and to the causes which make any healing of the breach improbable, and I begin to think impossible. (Cheers.) Our opponents have no difficulty whatever in defining those causes. They would tell you—they have told you again and again—that they are to be found in the treachery, in the incalculable baseness, in the inordinate ambition of a few gentlemen whom they describe as dissentient Liberals—(laughter)—and amongst whom they give a prominent place to the individual who is addressing you—(laughter and

cheers)—and to whom they ascribe a double dose of original sin. (A laugh.) I shall not waste your time to-night in personal recrimination. I do not think it worth while to investigate the motives which have led these gentlemen to reverse the opinions of a lifetime in twenty-four hours ; but, at least, I am justified in asking them to recognise the fact that there is not one Liberal Unionist, from the highest down to the lowest, who has gained anything, or who could by possibility have gained anything, by separating himself from his party. (Cheers.) Let us start with that, and I appeal to the Gladstonians present, and who hear me—let us start with this, that although we may be mistaken, in which case it is your duty to oppose us strenuously—aye, and if you care to carry out your threats, to drive us from political life—(hear)—at least, we have deliberately sacrificed personal ambition and everything that political men hold dear—(cheers)—in pursuance of an honest conviction ; and we are trying, like Mr. Forster, to serve our country. (Cheers.) Now, my object to-night will be to state to you, as clearly as I can, the issues upon which this controversy has to be waged. I was reading a speech the other day in which, amidst a good deal of the usual abuse, I noticed a statement that the Liberal Unionists had deserted Mr. Gladstone on a question of detail. Let us examine that statement for ourselves. Let us see whether it really is a trivial and unimportant matter which has caused this great cleavage, which has caused this separation of parties, which has revolutionised our whole political system, which has made it possible for me, who have been all my life a Liberal and a Radical—(hooting and cheers)—do you hoot that statement—do you object to the fact that I am a Radical? (Laughter.) I say there has been a change, which has made it possible that I, who have been a Radical all my life, and who have not changed one of the opinions—(cheers)—I have ever expressed, should support, heartily and cordially, a Government every member of which, with one exception, is a Conservative ; and a change which has also made it possible for the bulk of the Liberal party to transform themselves into the allies of Mr. Parnell—(hear, hear)—to be hand and glove with the men whom, three years ago, they denounced from every platform—(cheers)—as the enemies of this country, and whose policy and methods they repudiated with scorn and with indignation. That is the duty which I set myself, and it is more neces-

sary some one should put the issues before the country, because our opponents seem carefully to avoid it. (Hear, hear.)

### A PARTY WITHOUT A POLICY.

I defy you to find an issue in any statement which is made to a public meeting by a Gladstonian speaker. You will find a great deal of abuse of the Tory Government, you will find a good deal more abuse of the Liberal Unionist; but you will not find any clear statement of the policy which these gentlemen profess, or of the differences which separate them from us. Why is that? The reason is not far to seek. They do not tell you, gentlemen, what their policy is, because they do not know themselves. (Loud laughter and cheers.) They are not Liberals. Liberals have a policy and a flag. (Renewed cheers.) These men have only a leader, and they do not know, and they do not care, into what ditch he is going to lead them. Their leader has deliberately chosen to enshroud his proceedings in mystery. He has refused to trust the people. He has refused to take the nation into his confidence, and accordingly his followers have to cover their ignorance of his intentions by vague declamations and generalities. ("What is your policy?") Wait a bit. (Laughter.) After all, there is hope for the Gladstonians. There is a gentleman, at all events, a member of the party, who is not satisfied to go any longer without a policy, and, as his own leaders will not supply him with one, he asks me to have compassion upon his destitution. (Laughter.) I will endeavour to satisfy you before I sit down. (Laughter.)

### GLADSTONIAN PHRASES.

But in the meantime let us see what the Gladstonians have to say for themselves. There was a meeting held a few days ago, I believe, in this hall. (Cheers.) By the accounts which I have received I should imagine that it was attended by the minority who voted against the resolution just now; but that meeting attempted to propound a policy, and this policy was contained in the first resolution, which was to the following effect: "That this meeting deplores the policy of coercion adopted by the Government, and that it expresses its unalterable opinion in favour of the free concession to the Irish

people of a measure of self-government". Now, ladies and gentlemen, you will see that that resolution is characterised by the vagueness of which I complain. We all of us deplore coercion—(cheers and cries of "No")—whether in England, or in Scotland, or in Ireland; and, above all, we regret that there should be a minority for whom coercion is necessary. (Hear, hear.) We all desire to see the largest possible extension of self-government in Ireland, although we couple that desire with the conditions which were affixed to it by Mr. Gladstone himself. (Cheers and hisses.) Yes, you cheer his conditions now; but why did you drop them out of your resolution at the meeting a few days ago? Those conditions were that there should be guarantees for the protection of the minority, for the integrity of the empire, and for the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. Give us those conditions, and we will give you as much self-government as you please. (Hear, hear.) I say that the resolution which was passed the other night was too vague and indefinite, and I turn therefore to the speeches which were delivered in its support, and I think that if the mind of the speakers had been expressed in the resolution—if, indeed, their own minds were clear upon the subject—that that resolution would have read something in this form: "That this meeting is of opinion that it is the inherent right of every Irishman to refuse to pay any rent if he chooses, and that it therefore disapproves of any law which interferes with his liberty in this respect; and, secondly, that this meeting is prepared, having confidence in its great leader, to accept any scheme of self-government for Ireland which may be proposed by Mr. Gladstone, and accepted by Mr. Parnell". (Cheers.)

#### THE ISSUE STATED.

Now, that is the issue which separates us at the present moment. We differ from our Gladstonian friends because we hold that the law of the land ought to be maintained—(hear, hear)—even although it involve the payment of rent, and we differ from them because we are not prepared to accept, at the hands of Mr. Parnell, a scheme of self-government for the Irish people. (Hear, hear.) The proposals which the Gladstonians are supporting amount, in the first place, to an agrarian revolution which would lead to the confiscation of all

property in land ; and they amount, in the second place, to a political revolution which would end in a separation between Ireland and Great Britain. (Cheers.) Now let me deal first with the political revolution. We, as Liberal Unionists, and in close alliance with the Conservative Unionists—(loud cheers)—refuse absolutely to surrender to the party of violence and disorder. (Renewed cheers.) We defeated the Home Rule Bill of Mr. Gladstone because we saw that that Bill would place in the absolute discretion of this party the lives and the property of the loyal minority of the people of Ireland—(cheers)—and because we saw also that this party would be enabled, whenever the interests of their agitation demanded it, or their political animosities prompted them—in the words of their own leader—to sever the last link which binds Ireland to Great Britain. (Cheers.) Nothing has occurred since to impair the force of our objections. Mr. Gladstone has offered no assurance that he would give us any guarantee or security which was wanting in the bill which we defeated ; and as long as that is the case we shall continue to oppose his return to power. (Cheers.)

#### MR. GLADSTONE'S ADMISSION.

There is one admission, however, which has been made, and which is of the utmost importance, which I think you ought to bear in mind. Mr. Gladstone has admitted that his bill was defective in a cardinal point, in a point of the very first importance, on which the whole measure centred. He has admitted that the representation of Ireland at Westminster must be continued. Why, without that representation it would have been impossible to preserve the supremacy of Parliament. Ireland itself, so long as this temporary arrangement lasted, would have been a mere tributary province, paying taxes and having no part in the determination of the laws by which those taxes were levied. It was an impossible scheme ; it was an absurd scheme ; it was a scheme that could not have lasted six months. (A voice : " It did before".) It never did, and this scheme which you all admit—which every Gladstonian admits at the present time—to have been a mistake and an impossibility, it was for rejecting this scheme that you abuse us as traitors—(" No, no," and cheers)—to the Liberal cause. Why, we are your saviours. (Cheers.) You

Gladstonians were blind followers of a blind leader. You were following on a road which you admit to have been the wrong one, and we brought you back to common sense and sound morality. And now after that experience what is your gratitude? Why you denounce us because we who put you right last time will not now consent to follow the man who made this inept proposal in a second proposal, the details of which he refuses absolutely to disclose. It appears to me that it is impossible for any reasonable or intelligent man to deny to us at least the right to keep our opinions in suspense until Mr. Gladstone has consented to lay his new scheme before the people—(hear, hear)—in order that we may be quite sure that it has not the same defects as those which we so successfully pointed out in the old ones. (Hear, hear.) Until he does so, until he takes you into his confidence, I hope that my fellow-countrymen will refuse to be misled by vague generalities and high-sounding phrases that mean nothing, and which may lead them altogether astray. (Cheers.)

#### “THE UNION OF HEARTS.”

We are promised, if we will put Mr. Gladstone back into office, that there will be a final settlement of the Irish question, and that there will be a union of hearts. (Cheers.) A “union of hearts”! I want you to examine that phrase carefully. (“What is your policy?”) There is another Gladstonian without a policy. (Laughter.) If the Home Rule Bill of Mr. Gladstone had passed, it is perfectly certain—it is known to everyone who has studied the question—that the great majority of the people of Ulster would have refused to have any part in the election of a Dublin Parliament—(hear, hear)—and would have resisted any attempt by that body to control their action and to tax them. That is a fact. What I want to ask the Gladstonians is: How did they propose to deal with this state of things? Suppose you had had the population of Ulster, the most loyal population in Ireland—(cheers)—the most industrious—(cheers)—the most energetic, the people who have done more for Ireland than all the agitators put together, the men who have created great industries and who have extended commerce—suppose these men resisted the establishment of an Irish Parliament, what would the Gladstonians have done? Would these men who deplore coercion

have sent an army to coerce the loyal people of Ulster and to force them against their will to transfer their allegiance from the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland to Mr. Parnell, and from the Imperial Parliament at Westminster to the National League at Dublin? Well, but that is not the only problem with which they would have had to deal. Suppose these gentlemen had pacified Ulster, not by the mild coercion which is adopted by the present Government—(loud and prolonged cheers and hooting)—it would take a good deal more than two or three months of imprisonment of a few of their leaders in order to put down the people of Ulster. But when they had pacified Ireland, pacified Ulster by a military occupation, and when a Dublin Parliament ruled supreme over the destinies of the whole of Ireland, then, supposing difficulties arose between this Parliament and the Parliament of Westminster, how are they to be met? Suppose this Parliament at Dublin were to refuse to pay the contribution which was exacted from it, and were to declare that Ireland, being a poor country, was unable to pay its fair share of the debt, or its contribution towards naval or military expenditure, would they in that case send an army in order to destroy the Parliament they had created? And supposing, again, this country were once more involved in war for its very existence, as it was at the beginning of the century, are you certain that the men who a short time ago were praying in public for the success of the Zulus, who were praying for a Russian war—are you certain that these men would bear their fair share of the sacrifices which would be entailed in such an emergency as that, and are you sure “the union of hearts” would endure such a strain? And yet it is a risk of this kind, a tremendous risk, a risk which involves the very existence of the nation, the loss of its gigantic commerce, and the ruin and disaster which would follow its loss, which you are asked to face with a light heart. Is it conceivable that there should be men—patriotic, respectable, and intelligent—who would run this risk upon the faith of all the double-faced utterances of men who say one thing in England and Scotland and another in America and Ireland?

“THE PEDANTS OF THE REVOLUTION.”

When I seek for any analogy to the short-sightedness of these men I can find it only in the history of the French Revolution. You

may remember that there arose at that time a body of politicians who were known to history as the Girondins. They were men of culture, of intelligence, of respectability, and they allowed their talents to be placed at the service of the Revolution, and used to cover its excesses and to defend its crimes. They thought they were guiding the storm when in reality they were being swept away by it; and Mr. Carlyle, in his history of these events, describes these men in a sentence as "the pedants of the Revolution". What other word befits those short-sighted politicians—the Morleys and the Shaw Lefevres and the Illingworths—(mingled hooting and cheers)—who are lending their respectability to cover the outrages of the National League and the dishonesty of the Plan of Campaign, in the hope that by this sop to Cerberus they will be able to retain their authority over the agitation, and that having sown the wind they will escape reaping the whirlwind. Gentlemen, I cannot conceive of anything more foolish, whether regarded in the light of history or of our present experience, than that the men of intelligence of whom I have spoken should lend themselves to proceedings that are promoting anarchy and disorder in the kingdom.

#### THE TWO COERCIONS.

Now let us come to the second point—the agrarian question—which I have said divides us from our present opponents. They say that coercion is not to be tolerated. They denounce us because we support coercion. What do they mean by coercion? (Cheers, and a voice: "What do you mean?") What do I mean? I will tell you what I mean, and I am here to denounce it as strongly as any man. I mean the coercion of the weak and the oppressed; I mean the shooting of old men—(cheers)—and young women on their own hearthstones—(cheers); I mean mutilation and outrage and violence of all kinds, established by the decrees of a secret tribunal and inflicted upon persons who cannot defend themselves—(cheers); I mean the coercion by the midnight assassin—(cheers)—and the moonlighter; I mean the coercion which brings oppression to those who refuse to obey the decrees of this illegal tribunal; I mean the coercion which denies the rites of burial to the dead and the rites of religion to the living. That is the coercion which I denounce.



That is not the coercion which is denounced by the Gladstonians. (A laugh.) You can see—I appeal to the vast majority in this hall and I ask you to note the interruptions. I want you to know what separates us from the Gladstonians. It is the same thing which separates you, the majority in this hall, from the minority, which jeers and laughs when we talk of the murder of old men and women in Ireland. The coercion which the Gladstonians denounce is the coercion of the law. All law is coercive, and the one thing which distinguishes a civilised State from barbarism is the fact that in a civilised State the law of the land is observed—(cheers)—and the people who disobey the law are punished. (Hear, hear.) In Ireland at the present time coercion means only what it means in England and Scotland, that men must obey the law. At the present moment in Ireland there is greater liberty and license of the press than there is in any other country in Europe. (Hooting.) If I had time I would ask you to make a ring round one of those men who is interrupting me, and then we would discuss this question together. I would ask him whether he knows what coercion is in Ireland at the present time. I will wager ten to one that there is not a single one of the men who have been hooting and shouting in this hall to-night who has ever read the Coercion Act. (Hear.)

#### THE CRIMES ACT EXPLAINED.

Now, I am going to tell you what it is. There is only one clause with which I need deal, because it is under that clause that all the imprisonments of which complaint is made have taken place. The other clauses are more or less important, but I do not think there is any serious objection to them. But the clause which is really the coercion clause, and the clause which has led to all this declamation and outcry, and which is denounced, and which we are denounced for supporting, is the second clause of the Crimes Act. That clause provides that certain offences, every one of which is punishable by imprisonment in England, shall be tried before magistrates instead of before juries. Now, that is the whole point—that is the tyranny which is compared by Mr. Gladstone to the tyranny of King Bomba of Naples, and which some people think ought to be got rid of by an agitation like the agitation about the Bulgarian atrocities. (Laughter.)

Let me go back for a moment, because I really think this matter is so important that it is worth while making it quite clear. The difference between the law in England and in Ireland is that these offences are tried in Ireland by two magistrates, whereas in England they may be tried by a jury : and the reason they are tried by two magistrates in Ireland instead of by a jury is because, under the pressure of the National League, no jury can be relied upon to give a verdict in accordance with its oath. Again and again juries in Ireland have refused to convict upon the clearest evidence, either because they were afraid or because they sympathised with the offender. And, gentlemen, this is not my statement alone. The same charge has been brought against Irish juries by Mr. Gladstone himself—(hear, hear)—and he brought it forward in order to justify a Crimes Act which, as you know, was much more severe than the one we are now considering. Now, gentlemen, I have gone one step, and shown you what coercion is. It consists in securing the trial of certain offences before magistrates instead of before a jury.

#### THE ACT AT WORK.

Now, I am going a step further. I defy any Gladstonian to point to one single case of any man who has been imprisoned under this Act who, by the slightest possibility, can be supposed to have been innocent of the offence with which he was charged. (Cheers.) I hope you follow me. Every man who has been sent to prison has undoubtedly committed the offence with which he was charged, and has broken the law in the way in which it was said he had broken it. I will take one illustration, and it shall be the case of Mr. Dillon. (Cheers.) Mr. Dillon has just been released from prison, and I think I may say for all of us—Conservatives, Liberals, and Gladstonians—that we are very glad he is out of it. (Cheers.) Mr. Dillon is a man who has no enemy except himself. We believe him to be honest, we think him to be mistaken ; and some of us believe that, honest as he is, he has done more mischief and brought more misery to the people of Ireland than if he had been the greatest criminal. (Loud cheers.) Now, Mr. Dillon was put in prison for inciting the tenants not to pay their rents, and for urging them to join the Plan of Campaign. Well, the plan of campaign has been declared to be illegal

by the highest court in Ireland. It has been disapproved by Mr. Parnell himself ; it has been condemned, on the grounds of religion and morality, by the Church of Rome. (Cheers.) Mr. Dillon is above all these things. He—in spite of the disapproval of his leader, in spite of the known illegality of the proceeding, in spite of the rescript of the Church of Rome—persisted in advocating this plan. He boasted again and again he would defy the law. He went to Ireland to disobey the law. He deliberately broke the law, and he suffered his punishment accordingly. Remember what my point is. At the present moment I am not discussing whether the law is just or not—I am coming to that afterwards—but my first point is that these men who are put in prison have all broken the law, and that as long as the law is the law they are rightly put in prison on that account. (Cheers.) As regards Mr. Dillon, you have seen statements in the papers. I have told you what he did ; but you have seen the Government abused, you have seen Mr. Balfour abused in the most shameful way—absolutely declared to have put Mr. Dillon in prison in order to get rid of, and even to sacrifice the life of, a political opponent. I cannot conceive of any charge more atrocious or more absolutely unfounded. Mr. Dillon positively invited his arrest, and I do not think that any Government could have existed for a day which, in face of such provocation, did not put the law in force. (Cheers.) That, then, is my point. I have only taken Mr. Dillon as the most distinguished case ; but I could take every case, and show you case after case in which the men put in prison have deliberately broken the law, and therefore it is true to say that at least they were not innocent of the offence with which they were charged.

### IS THE LAW UNJUST ?

But then it may be said, “The law is unjust”. Yes, but bear in mind that in that case your complaint is not against coercion, but against the law which coercion is intended to enforce. As long as there is a law it must be put into effect. If a law is wrong, by all means let us join hands and try to alter it ; but so long as it is the law of the land we are bound to obey it. (Cheers.) If we do not obey it we must suffer the penalty. (Hear, hear.) Now, I have shown, I think, the real grievance. If our opponents would only

express themselves clearly—and I am trying to come to close quarters with them—their grievance is that the law is unjust. If I understand their view, it is that the law is being used in Ireland in order to collect unjust and unfair and exorbitant rents, and that under these circumstances the law ought not to be obeyed. Now, let us go into that. If it were true, I should still have two observations to make. In the first place, I should say that the law ought to be obeyed as long as it is the law, and the fact that it was unjust was not a reason for disobeying, but it was a reason for repealing it. If everybody was at liberty to pick and choose which law he would choose to obey and which law he would not obey, I am afraid there are few laws would be obeyed by the people for whose use they were passed. (Cheers.) My second point would be : even if the law were unjust, that is no reason whatever for conceding Mr. Parnell's demand for Home Rule, because there is no body in the world more capable or more willing to redress proved injustice than the House of Commons, the representative assembly of Great Britain and Ireland, the assembly which represents the democracy of the three kingdoms. But now I am coming home to the last point. Is the law unjust? I go back for a moment to the meeting which was held here a few days ago. My friend, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, made a long speech in which he spoke frequently of the injustice of the rents that were being collected in Ireland. Mr. Shaw Lefevre has been in the House of Commons much longer than I have been. I believe he entered it in 1863. He must have been a member of the House of Commons during all the time when Mr. Gladstone's legislation was being carried through. He must have been aware of the Land Act of 1870, he must have been aware of the Land Act of 1881, and he must have been aware of the subsequent legislation passed by the Conservative Government in 1887. But he speaks as if all this legislation had never been passed, and as if the law were still the same as it was when he first entered Parliament. Surely my friend Mr. Shaw Lefevre cannot have been asleep all the time. (Laughter.)

#### THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE IRISH TENANTS.

It is worth while recalling what is the present position of the Irish tenant under this legislation. I wonder whether the gentle-

men who cheered Mr. Shaw Lefevre when he said the rents were unjust, knew what I am now going to tell you. The tenant in Ireland has had transferred to him full property in all the improvements made upon his holding by himself or by his predecessors. They are his property. He has had given to him the right to sell this property, which is called the tenant-right, to the highest bidder. The landlord has no longer any right to take advantage of competition in raising his rent, but the tenant has the right to take advantage of any competition he can get in raising the price of his tenant-right. And accordingly within the last few years there have been numerous cases in which these down-trodden tenantry have sold their individual tenant-right—that is to say, the right to hold the land at the rent fixed—for a sum which has amounted to twenty and even thirty years' purchase of the rent, and which has been a great deal more than the landlord himself could obtain for the free-hold of the land. (Cheers.) But that is not all. The tenant has the right to go to an impartial court, to a court whose members have been most of them appointed by Mr. Gladstone's Administration, in order to have a fair rent fixed, and that rent is not to be a rent which can be obtained in the market, but such a rent as the tenant can be fairly expected to pay, having regard to all the circumstances of the case. Well, all these advantages were conferred upon the tenant by Mr. Gladstone's legislation; and, remember this, that Mr. Gladstone recommended that legislation to the Parliament, to the country, and, above all, to the landlords, on the ground that—although it would reduce their rent, it would make them absolutely secure in the remnant of their property. The promise has not been kept. They are not secured even in the remnant of their property. In 1887 there was more legislation. This time, the Conservative Government, with the assistance and support of the Liberal Unionists, brought in a bill which took account of the fall in prices, and which declared that these tenants who had got a fair rent fixed for fifteen years were to be allowed to go once more into court and get a further reduction, on this fair rent to get a fairer rent, and to deduct a further sum from the income of the landlords in order that absolute justice might be done; and then, in order that there might not be a possibility of an unfair and unjust eviction, by this same Act the courts were given an equitable jurisdic-

tion, and were empowered if a man came before them under process of eviction who said he could not pay his rent, and it turned out that he was unable to pay it owing to misfortune and not to his own fault—the court was given the power to delay the payment of rent, and make the payment in instalments instead of down at once and in a lump sum. Now, I ask you, gentlemen, as honest men, is it possible under such circumstances, and with this legislation, that the evictions which are going on in Ireland can be unfair and unjust evictions? (Cries of “No”.) They might have been in 1863, when Mr. Shaw Lefevre entered Parliament; they might have been in 1869, before Mr. Gladstone commenced his last legislation; it was possible that they might have been in 1886, with the fall in prices, and before the Conservative Government brought in their last bill; but after 1887, it is impossible that there can be unfair and unjust evictions in Ireland; and I say that at the present time the position of the Irish tenant is far better than that of any tenant in any other part of the world. (Cheers.)

#### AN INSTRUCTIVE COMPARISON.

I appeal to you, the working men of Bradford. Compare it with your own condition. I suppose there are thousands and tens of thousands of workmen in Bradford, as there are in Birmingham, who have a little house of their own and who rent it from a landlord. Gentlemen, what is your position? If you make any improvements, if you enlarge your house, if you paper your rooms, if you put in a grate, everything goes to the landlord. It is not your property, it is his. (Cheers.) If you think your rent excessive you have no appeal. You cannot go to a court to get a fair rent fixed, you must pay the rent demanded or turn out and let some one else go in. (Cheers.) Yes, gentlemen, and you know there are now in the large towns in England and in London, aye, and in the large towns of America—that there are every week more evictions than take place in Ireland in a year—(cheers)—and yet there is no Shaw Lefevre—(laughter and cheers)—to raise his eloquent voice against the tyranny which is worse than that of King Bomba of Naples. (Laughter and cheers.) What is the reason then for this persistent agitation in Ireland? I stand here and say I do not believe there would be

any evictions to-day if it were not for the pressure put upon the tenants by the National League. (Cheers.) The agitation in Ireland, the scenes—the dramatic scenes—which are got up for English readers would not have taken place but for the efforts of a body of Irishmen whose avowed object it has been throughout the whole of those proceedings to make the government of Ireland impossible, and they would not have taken place but for the sympathy of a body of Englishmen who have been content, in order to purchase eighty-six Irish votes in Parliament—(cheers)—to surrender all the principles upon which society rests, and by which the welfare and the security of all classes, of the poorest as well as of the richest, are secured. Well, gentlemen, to this surrender we, the Liberal Unionists, will not lend ourselves. (Cheers.) We see in it only anarchy and confusion, and disaster to all concerned—(hear, hear)—and while we are willing, according to the best traditions of English Liberalism, to seek out and redress all proved grievances, we will not be deceived by hypocritical pretences, nor will we be frightened by threats of violence and outrage into the abandonment of what is our plain duty—to protect the minority in the enjoyment of their rights, to maintain the liberty of every subject of the Queen—(cheers)—to speak and do the thing he wills within the confines of the law, and to preserve intact the faith, the honour, and the integrity of our country. (Loud and continued cheers during which the right hon. gentleman resumed his seat, having spoken an hour and eighteen minutes.)

*NOTTINGHAM, September 26, 1888.*

## THE LAW OF THE LAND AND THE LAW OF THE LEAGUE.

[The following speech was delivered at a mass meeting at Nottingham in response to a resolution moved by Col. Seeley and seconded by Mrs. Fawcett. Mr. Chamberlain who was received with loud and prolonged cheering after referring to the late Mr. Fawcett's well known views on the Irish question, said :—]

FOR nearly three years the Irish question has occupied, almost exclusively, the field of politics, and one would have thought that at least we might have by this time attained to a clear conception of the points of difference. But I am afraid that, so far from that being the case, we have recently been going backward, and much of the discussion which has taken place on the other side has been rather for the purpose of darkening counsel and confusing the issue. (Cheers.) Two or three years ago we had a plan—a definite plan—put before us, with very little notice, it is true, but at the same time with sufficient notice to enable us to examine and criticise it, and as a consequence to reject it. (Loud cheers.) And our rejection of the plan was confirmed afterwards still more emphatically by the decision—the verdict of the nation. (Cheers.) Colonel Seeley has told you that that plan no longer holds the field, and he has asked what has become of it. I am not a racing man—(laughter)—and your chairman will no doubt correct me—(renewed laughter)—if I am wrong in saying that I think that plan may fairly be described as having been scratched. (Laughter and cheers.)

### WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR?

But, if that is so, what are we fighting about? Our opponents will not give us a tangible principle that we can take hold of and either accept or reject. When we ask for a new plan in the place of



the one they have withdrawn they refuse to give us any satisfaction. In those circumstances the political contest becomes a mere ignoble struggle for place and power. (Cheers.) These men condemn the Government because it is the Government and because they want its place. They denounce the Government policy, but they will not tell us what they would do if we gave them the opportunity for which they ask. They are relying on three things. They rely in the first place upon the strength of party ties and upon the shibboleth of party names. It is not measures they put before you. They claim to have the goodwill of the Liberal party, and on that ground alone they ask all Liberals to vote for them without asking what they would do with the power and influence which we should give them. (Cheers.) They rely in the second place upon your dislike and upon the instinctive dislike which every Liberal has to what is called coercion—to any extension of the ordinary law. They forget to tell you that this extension is only necessary in order to maintain the law which exists and is enforced in every civilized State of the world. (Cheers.) In the third place, they count upon your sympathy with the wrongs of the Irish tenants, with wrongs which no doubt had a real existence at no distant time. But they forget altogether to tell you all that has been done in recent years in order to redress and remove those wrongs. It is, however, on the strength of these three things that the Gladstone-Parnellite combination hope to come back into office, and if they come back in these circumstances you know that they would have a free hand. They would have no mandate, no policy to which they would be committed; they would be able to revive this dead Bill which has been withdrawn, or be able if they liked to bring forward a brand-new measure that might be worse, and upon which you and the people of this country had never been consulted. These tactics place us at a great disadvantage. In arguing the question we do not know what we have to answer. We do not know what we have to attack.

### THREE QUESTIONS FOR HOME RULERS.

There are three questions which I have ventured time after time to put to Mr. Gladstone, and to put to the leaders of the Gladstonian party, to which I have never yet been able to obtain an answer. I ask you to bear these questions in mind, and to put them again and

again, until you do get an answer, to your members who support Mr. Gladstone. The first question is, How do these people propose, if you give them the opportunity once more of trying their hands at a plan for the government of Ireland—how do they propose to secure the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament? (Hear, hear.) They admit that it ought to be respected. They admit that in the Bill which we defeated, and which they abuse us for defeating, that supremacy was not secured. The Imperial Parliament was destroyed—the representation of Ireland had disappeared, Ireland no longer formed any part in our representative system. Now we are told there is somewhere or other in the brain of their great leader a plan by which this defect will be removed. Then ask your representatives to ask this great leader to take the people of England into his confidence, and as he has got a plan let him open his hand and show us what it is that we also may bring our judgment to bear upon it. The second question that I would ask is this, How do our Gladstonian opponents propose in the future to deal with the natural refusal, opposition, and reluctance of the province of Ulster to be placed at the mercy of the National League and the authors of the Plan of Campaign? (Cheers.) Do they intend to coerce—they who object, forsooth, to coercion—do they intend to coerce the loyal and law-abiding inhabitants of Ulster? (Cheers.) Do they reserve coercion for those who have deserved well of the Empire, and do they reserve their benefits and their concessions only for those who have promoted disorder and violence? In the third place, I ask this question, How do the Gladstonians intend to deal with the land question, which is at the root of the whole difficulty—of the whole of the discontent and disaffection in Ireland? We have heard on the authority of Lord Spencer and Mr. Morley and other of Mr. Gladstone's lieutenants that it will not be safe to deal with the question of Home Rule, and that they will not assent to any proposal for Home Rule which is not preceded or accompanied by a measure which shall deal with the relations between landlord and tenant. I am very curious to know whether these gentlemen, who have not been too consistent in the past—(cheers)—will be consistent in the future. I have to remind them of the statements which they have made, and bearing in mind those statements, I say we have a right to ask them and Mr. Gladstone, "How do you propose to deal with

this question of the land, which you admit to be of paramount importance, so that there shall be neither, on the one hand, any confiscation of the property of any class of Her Majesty's subjects, nor, on the other hand, any inordinate risk or burden imposed upon the taxpayers of Great Britain?" (Cheers.)

### THE OLD LIBERAL POLICY.

Those are the questions which I have asked, and which I hope that you will ask, trusting that you may be more fortunate than I have been in getting an answer. But meanwhile and for to-night I shall content myself in the first place with endeavouring to lay before you briefly the policy of the Liberal-Unionists—I would say of the Unionist party—which we ask you to support, and then I will examine some of those side issues which our opponents are raising up and down the country in order to blind you to the real issues, and in order to induce you from pure weariness to make the sacrifices which they demand of you. The Unionist policy is the policy which was the policy of the whole Liberal party down to the beginning of 1886. It is the old policy of the Liberal party. (Cheers.) It was the policy of Lord Grey, of Mr. John Bright—(cheers)—it was the policy of Mr. Gladstone himself until more than two years ago, when, in an unhappy moment for himself and for his country—(loud cheers)—he accepted the policy of Mr. Parnell, and of Mr. Parnell's paymasters, the American-Irish. (Cheers.) Our policy is based upon the belief that, by a patient continuance in well-doing, by firm and just government, coupled with a persistent endeavour to seek out and remove them, all proved causes of disaffection in Ireland may disappear, and Ireland may become in time as loyal and as prosperous as Scotland now is. (Cheers.) Bear in mind that for 60 years after the union between Scotland and England the Scotch people were as disaffected as the Irish people are now, and rebellion in Scotland was a much more serious affair than anything which we have had to deal with in Ireland; but by mutual consideration, by just concession, by good government, all causes of jealousy and of hostility have long since been removed, and the Scotch nation, while retaining its individuality, its aspirations and its nationality, has nevertheless identified itself with the greater nation of which it forms a part, and to whose influence and power and

glory its citizens have contributed so large a share. (Cheers.) Why should it be impossible to do the same in Ireland? (Cheers.) The will to do the thing is there. Why should it be impossible to secure the same result in Ireland as has been obtained in Scotland? (Cheers.) We have already shown our readiness to deal with grievances; we have dealt, and dealt effectively, with much which has formed an important item in the programme of Irish patriots of generations ago; we have given to the Irish people religious liberty and religious equality; we have disestablished the alien church; we have established a national system of education; we have equalised the franchise until every Irish citizen stands in this respect in the same position as Englishmen and Scotchmen. (Cheers.) We have endeavoured to deal with the relations between landlord and tenant, and if we have not succeeded, we have, as Mrs. Fawcett has told you, placed the Irish tenant in a better position than any agricultural tenant on the face of the globe. (Cheers.) Is that a bad record of the Liberals during the past generation? (Cheers.) Is it not a good earnest for the future? (Cheers.) Is there any reason why we should stop there? If there is at the present any desire on the part of the Irish party, or on the part of any important section of the Irish people for an extension of their institutions, there is no desire on our part to deny to them those new privileges, provided guarantees are given to us that they will not abuse them. (Cheers.) If the tenants of Ireland desire to enter upon full possession of the land they till, and for facilities to be afforded them for becoming the owners of that land, here, again, there is every desire on the part of the Government and of the Liberal-Unionists, and, I hope, on the part of the Opposition, to consider and to deal with any reasonable proposal for accomplishing that object. And, more than that, there is in England, I believe, a desire to make amends for the faults and errors in the past, and to afford the assistance which a rich country can give to a poor one, to promote the industrial development of their country. (Cheers.) If more has not already been done in this direction, where does the fault lie? (Cheers.) It does not lie with us—(cheers)—it lies with the Parnellite party—(cheers)—it lies with the Nationalist members, supported as they have been in their obstruction by a large section of the Gladstonian party, who have again and again interfered, to prevent the benefit of the work which the Government was anxious

to do. I firmly believe they do not desire that Ireland should be peaceful or contented, but desire to keep open the sore in order to promote disaffection to British institutions. (Cheers.)

#### THE GLADSTONIAN SOMERSAULT.

I say, then, that the remedial policy which I have described was the policy of the Liberal party up to 1885, and I defy any one of our opponents to show any good reason why this policy was then suddenly cast aside, and why in place of it there was adopted a policy which was borrowed from the men who have preached the gospel of public plunder, and who are distinguished chiefly by their hostility to the British connexion. (Cheers.) There is not a man living who does not know that this somersault, the greatest that has ever been effected in the history of English politics, was only decided upon because at the general election of 1885 Mr. Gladstone did not obtain the majority for which he asked in order to enable him to deal with the Irish question upon the old lines. (Cheers.) I think it is rather hard that the electors of Great Britain, of England, and of Scotland, should be punished because they had not sufficient confidence in Mr. Gladstone to give him the majority which would have enabled him to be independent of the Parnellite party. (Laughter.) Now, what are the excuses that are given for this change of front? We are told that the Irish party has entirely altered its complexion—(laughter)—the leopard has at last changed its spots—(laughter and cheers)—the tone and temper of the Irish leaders of agitation have become so admirable that Mr. Gladstone feels justified in trusting them absolutely, and in giving them that which at one time he absolutely refused. When did this change take place? How was it proved? When was it manifested to us? Those of you who read the papers will see that even at the present moment the gospel of public plunder is being daily preached in Ireland by the leaders of the National agitation. (Cheers.) And as to the new friendship which these gentlemen profess for England, that appears only in speeches which are manufactured for home consumption, but it does not appear at all in the speeches which are delivered in America or to purely Irish audiences. (Hear, hear.) No, if we are to make this great change, if we are to alter the Constitution of the United

Kingdom, if we are to run the risk which even our opponents cannot deny to be a great and serious one, for my part I should prefer to do it on some better evidence than that which is afforded us of the conversion of Irish members to the cause of loyalty and order. (Cheers.) It is not the Irish members who have changed, it is the Gladstonian members—(cheers)—who for reasons best known to themselves have swallowed all their previous declarations, and now approve and encourage and support the very things which a few months or years ago, at all events, they were the first to condemn.

### THE DOCTRINE OF ANARCHY.

There is another excuse which is more plausible and which deserves more serious examination. It is said that there is no alternative except coercion, and that coercion is impossible as a permanent policy, and that, therefore, it is absolutely necessary to accept and to concede the Irish demands. Now, let us examine that statement carefully and seriously. In the first place let me point out to you that it would carry us a very long way if you admitted that coercion—that is to say, the force which is necessary to maintain the law of the land—cannot be possibly exercised permanently, or at all events as long as it is necessary. Then you must admit that whenever any section of the people, wherever they may be, carry their resistance to the law far enough, their demands, whatever they may be, must of necessity be surrendered. I should like to know what law under such circumstances would be maintained and obeyed. (Cheers.) That is the doctrine of pure anarchy, and I oppose a doctrine of anarchy as a Liberal and a Democrat. (Cheers.) I say that the law is the alternative that we Radicals and Liberals have been endeavouring to establish everywhere in place of arbitrary power. (Cheers.) It behoves us of all men to maintain respect for the law which we have set up. If this doctrine now preached by Liberals is to hold good, it is not worth while to consider whether the demands of the Irish people are reasonable or not, or whether the concession of them would entail serious consequences upon their own people and upon ourselves. We have only to concede at once, because according to this argument any alternative of force is impossible. (Cheers.) I hold that the law which is made by the majority may be enforced by the majority—

(cheers)—and that whatever force is necessary for that purpose is legitimate force, and it is only by the use of that force that Government can be held together. (Cheers.)

### THE REAL AUTHORS OF COERCION.

But I deny altogether that coercion was, or is, the only alternative to Home Rule. (Hear, hear.) I admit that the Parnellite party had it in their power to compel—and they have used their power—the Government to extend the ordinary law in order to secure the observance of the ordinary law. But it was their fault. It was their deliberate work; it was not a necessary alternative. (Cheers.) Now, I want you to follow the steps of this conspiracy. I want to show you the stages by which the state of things of which complaint is now made in Ireland has been brought about. I want to show you who are the authors of coercion in Ireland, what is the nature of coercion in Ireland, and I want at the same time to show you how this play has been set upon the stage, and how the effects have been produced by which it is sought to secure your sympathies for imaginary wrong. (Loud cheers.) I shall have to go back for a year or two. I shall have to take you across the water, I shall have to carry you once more to the Convention of Chicago. Now, bear in mind the importance of going back to the origin of this movement. It is not an Irish movement with which we have to deal, it is unlike every other Irish agitation up to the present time. In the past Irish agitations have been spontaneous, they have been based upon great acknowledged grievances, which have since been removed, and in the past the Irish leaders have been disinterested. (Cheers.) This is the first time in the history of Ireland—I believe it is the first time in the history of any agitation that has ever called itself patriotic—in which every leader of the agitation, from the highest to the lowest, has profited by the agitation. (Loud cheers.) The influence of Mr Parnell at the present moment depends wholly upon the fact that he is the channel through which flow, for the support of the Irish party, the subscriptions from the servant girls of America. (Cheers.) The Irish patriotic party is a kept party. (Renewed cheers.) In these circumstances, we have a right to go back to America and to ask from the Convention of Chicago what is the policy which these men are carry-

ing out? If you want the policy of the Irish party, you must go to Mr. Patrick Egan and Mr. Ford. It is they who pay the piper, and it is they who call the tune. (Cheers.) Now, at the Convention of Chicago there appears to have been a good deal of difference of opinion. The leaders of the agitation in America were not altogether satisfied with the state of things on this side of the water. There was a Tory Government in power, Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill had been defeated, the Tory Government were trying to govern the country by the ordinary law, and they said they would not have recourse to coercion if they could possibly avoid it; the country was peaceable, and there were fewer outrages than for a long time before. That was not a satisfactory state of things to Mr. Ford and to Mr. Egan—(cheers)—and accordingly there were differences, and they were only arranged after much consultation and many private interviews, and at last Mr. Redmond, Mr. Parnell's delegate at this convention, was put forward to make a speech and declare the result of the negotiations, and he did so in a very interesting speech, the whole of which was important. But I intend to quote a single paragraph, because that paragraph is the keynote of everything that has followed since. Remember, I am showing you the origin of coercion. This is what Mr. Redmond said:—"It now remains for us to prove for the thousandth time that as slaves we can be formidable foes. I assert here to-day that the government of Ireland by England is impossible, and I believe it to be our duty to make it so." ("Oh, oh.") Mr. Redmond and his friends have been trying ever since to make government in Ireland impossible—(cheers)—and they have failed only because of the resolution of the Government and of Mr. Balfour, the Chief Secretary for Ireland. (Cheers.)

#### MR. GLADSTONE'S PROPHECY.

Well, when Mr. Redmond returned to Ireland he had to carry out the pledge he had given to the Convention of Chicago, and he addressed many meetings, always to the same tune. Here is an extract from a speech which he made at Glenbeigh on the 5th of December 1886. He said:—"When Mr. Gladstone was defeated in England last year, and when the Tories came into power, they boasted that they could govern Ireland by means of the ordinary law. Mr. Gladstone,



on the contrary, told the people of England that they had to choose between coercion on the one side and Home Rule on the other. Home Rule was defeated at the last election in Great Britain, and I say advisedly that if in the face of that defeat the Tories had been able to rule Ireland with the ordinary law, the result would have been in England and Scotland the throwback of the cause perhaps for a generation, and to give the lie direct to the prophecy of Mr. Gladstone." Do you not think that such prophets have a great responsibility? (Cheers.) Shall I make any comment on the extract I have just read to you? What! because the Tories were trying to govern Ireland by the ordinary law, because if they succeeded, because if Ireland remained peaceful they would give the lie to the prophecy of Mr. Gladstone, therefore Mr. Redmond and all his colleagues, the leaders of the agitation in Ireland, were bound to do their utmost to promote disorder and to force the Government to adopt the policy of coercion! (Cheers.) It is only fair to Mr. Redmond to say that in the same speech he boasted that they would do this without breaking the law and without committing any outrage. That was a very proper thing for him to say. Irish members do say that sort of thing. (Laughter.) But the law is broken and outrages are committed. Let us follow the advice that was given; let us see how it works out in practice; let us see how the Irish people—no, I will not do the Irish people that injustice—(cheers)—let us see how a fragment, a minority, of the Irish people act upon the hints which these men have given to them.

#### THE QUESTION OF ARREARS OF RENT.

Now, let us look first at the question of evictions; let us see what these evictions are for which our sympathy is being asked. Remember what you are told in your local Press, which really, as far as I have seen from the few examples I have been able to read, is rapidly emulating all the virtues of *United Ireland* and the *Irish World*. You are told in this Press—(cries of "*Express*," and loud laughter)—in this influential and well-informed *Express*—(laughter)—that evictions take place in Ireland because a down-trodden peasantry cannot pay the arrears of unjust rents. Now, it so happens that I have an especial interest in this question of arrears of rent. I felt when the Act of 1887 was passed that it was not altogether complete; that it

was possible that there might be cases in which a tenant was subject to a rent which a Court might subsequently declare to be unfair, and that there might be a chance that the tenant might be evicted for arrears which had arisen in consequence of rent so declared to be unjust, and therefore to meet these cases I urged upon the Government that they should introduce clauses to deal with arrears, and the Government consented ; and in two successive Sessions of Parliament they offered to introduce clauses or to bring in a Bill to deal with this question of arrears. In every case in which a tenant was proved to be embarrassed in his circumstances, and unable, through misfortune, to pay his rent, they undertook to give to the Court power to deal with these arrears and to make any composition which the Court thought just, provided that at the same time the Court was allowed to deal with the other debts of the tenant—with his debts to the usurer and his debts to the shopkeepers. (Cheers.) That was a fair, a generous, a wise proposal. What is the use of relieving tenants from arrears of rent if you leave them burdened down to the ground by arrears of debt to other persons? If you are to do them any good you must deal with all their debts, and I can conceive nothing more desirable in the interests of these embarrassed tenants than that they should have a clean slate, and be started afresh with some chance of making a subsistence out of their land. The proposal of the Government was not carried into effect solely and entirely on account of the opposition of the Nationalist members, and especially of Mr. Dillon, who led them. I appealed to Mr. Dillon again and again in the House of Commons on behalf of the tenants for whom he expressed an anxiety which I desired to believe honest and sincere. Mr. Dillon threw his shield and the shield of his colleagues over the usurer and over the shopkeeper who gives credit and charges usurious prices, because the usurer and the gombeen man are the chief supporters of the National League ; and if in the last few years there has been, and in this year there shall be, any tenant evicted from his holding in consequence of unfair arrears, the fault lies with Mr. Dillon more than with any other man alive.

#### WHY EVICTIONS TAKE PLACE.

But that does not apply, at any rate, to the evictions which have recently taken place. I shall show you that in these cases at any

rate no Arrears Act in the world, provided it had a foundation of justice, could possibly have done anything to prevent them. Let us take one or two cases. We can see by actual cases, better perhaps than by any general statement, what is the nature of the proceedings which are going on in Ireland. Take the case of the Clanricarde estate. Lord Clanricarde is a very unpopular landlord, and no doubt that is the reason why his estate was chosen for the operation of the Plan of Campaign, but no one could say—if he does he says what is untrue—that the rents of Lord Clanricarde were otherwise than low rents. About the first of this month there were four or five evictions, one of a man called Tully. He was called Dr. Tully; and why did they call him doctor? It was because he prescribed leaden pills for landlords. (Laughter.) This man was a boat-builder, earning large wages, with a considerable amount of money at the bank. He held a farm of 17 acres, but he did not get his living from the farm, which only afforded him occupation in addition to his regular work. This farm was valued at £4 a year. The actual rent was £2 10s. a year. Tully was evicted the other day for £7 10s., three years' rent. He could have paid the rent ten, twenty, or fifty times over if he had been honest. The other tenants who were evicted owed two and a half years', three years', or even more. Not in a single case was the rent of these farms in excess of the Government valuation. Now I say there are no Arrears Acts in the world intended for the benefit of people like these. Take again the Vandeleur evictions, which were precisely similar in character. On the Vandeleur estate there was a tenant Michael Connell who held a farm for which he owed two and a half years' rent. The total amount of the debt was £84. The landlord proceeded against him, but offered to take £25 down, for one and a half years' rent, and leave the remaining year's rent over for further settlement. He offered to take a reduction of one-third upon the rent and postpone the collection of the remainder. The offer was refused, and the man was evicted. Well, it so happens that at the Vandeleur evictions Mr. Russell was present. Mr. Russell is one of the most eloquent and energetic advocates of the tenants they ever had; he strongly urged upon the Government this question of arrears, and he has interfered on behalf of the tenant again and again by means of amendments, by speech and vote, in order to extend the benefits of

the Act of 1887. Fortunately for the truth he went to see these evictions for himself, and reported that in not one single case was a tenant turned out who would not be able to pay his rent several times over. One of the tenants said to him : " Yes, I am able to pay my rent ten times over, but I should pay it with my life". (Shame.) Yet this is not an exceptional statement. I have spoken of the Clanricarde estate. I do not know whether you have seen a most interesting book recently published by an American, Mr. Hurlbert, who, I suppose, may be assumed to be an impartial citizen of the civilised world, and who went to Ireland to see for himself what the state of things was there. Mr. Hurlbert, when he went to Portumna, saw some of the evicted tenants, and they said : " We could have paid the rent, but we would not have been let".

#### THE COERCION OF THE LEAGUE.

Now, you have seen how coercion has been forced upon the movement. You see also what is the coercion that exists in Ireland. There is a coercion there, but it is not the coercion of the law. (Cheers.) It is the coercion of the League. Let us go a little further ; let us see how this is exercised. Again, I will take actual instances in order that I may bring before you the state of things with which you are asked to sympathise. How is it that these men who have the money in their pockets suffer themselves to be evicted rather than pay their rents ? Who is it who prevents them, and how are they prevented ? Here is one case ; it came to light at the Wicklow Spring Assizes. There was a man named Kirby who had a small farm, but was not successful with it. He emigrated to America, leaving his wife and children behind to carry on the farm. Naturally enough they were less able to do that than himself, and they fell into arrears. They could not pay their rent, and were turned out. The woman went to join her husband in America, but she left two of her children behind, one of them in the charge of her father, an old man named Patrick Quirke. In order to increase his income—it is said in order to be able to support the child the late tenant left with him—he took the farm which was vacant. For doing so he was denounced by the Land League, and one dark night there came a knock at his door and two men appeared upon the threshold. They called down the old man, his wife, and the

child who was sleeping with them. They then forced the old man down upon his knees and shot him. He called out for mercy, crying: "I am dead". "No," said one of the ruffians, "you are not dead yet," and thereupon he fired another shot at the old man, and left him to bleed to death a few hours afterwards. ("Shame.") There is another case which was tried at the Maryborough Summer Assizes. It was the case of a schoolmaster named Patrick Robinson, who had given some offence to the League, and had been boycotted. One morning as he was arranging the school with the help of two children—his two little girls—a body of men came to the school-house masked. They ordered one of the children to go on her knees, and they dragged the schoolmaster by his collar to the wall and forced him down upon his knees also. Then the leader of the party told one of the others to shoot the kneeling girl, but the man addressed refused, as he had not the heart to do the deed. Thereupon the leader fired at the girl himself. The pistol missed fire, and he fired at the girl again and at the man, whom he wounded seriously. Fortunately the girl was unharmed, the shot only going through her dress. That is coercion in Ireland. (Cheers.) In both these cases the criminals were brought to justice by the operation of that much abused Crimes Act, which is so greatly denounced.

#### A CHALLENGE TO THE GLADSTONIANS.

I want to know whether the Gladstonians justify these outrages? (Cries of "No" and counter cries of "Yes".) If they do not, why do they not denounce them? (Loud cheers.) Why do they only denounce the law by which the criminals have been brought to justice? I have told you of two cases, and I could keep you here all night with other cases of a similar nature. But there are many cases in which no one has been brought to justice because the witnesses were terrified by the fate of Norah Fitzmaurice and of the Curtin family, who were boycotted and ruined and refused the rites of religion because they had given evidence against the murderer of their father. I heard Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons give an account of some of these cases, and Mr. O'Brien got up afterwards to answer him and said that it was all "disgusting claptrap". I call upon you to judge between the Government and Mr. O'Brien, between the law and the League. (Loud cheers.) If there is to be

a Home Rule Parliament, let it be defended upon its merits. If it can be proved to be for the good of Ireland, and not to be injurious to the interests of the country, by all means vote for it ; but do not be deluded into supporting it by tales of imaginary wrongs, which will not bear examination, or by denunciations of a law as arbitrary when it is only a law against criminals and people who incite to crime. (Hear, hear.) I have told you what is the Unionist policy. It consists in a firm and just administration of the law, and at the same time in the redress of proved grievances. The Parnellite policy is to drive you by weariness of outrage and disorder into making sacrifices which they know that they cannot recommend to you by argument. If our opponents want a separate Parliament, let them tell us what their plan is. Let them give us the opportunity of criticising and amending it, if it should require amendment. Let them prove to us that their plan does not endanger the unity which they profess to respect. Let them, if they can, advance some reasons why, at a time when all other nations in the civilised world are doing what they can to strengthen the ties which bind their several portions together and to consolidate their empires, we alone should proceed to a policy of disintegration which, begun in Ireland, will inevitably spread until it saps the edifice of the national existence, against which the foreign invader has hitherto stormed in vain, and which domestic enemies have failed to undermine. Let our opponents appeal to our reason. Let them convince us by argument and fair discussion. Let them prove, if they can, that all the wisdom and all the labour of statesmen in the past were mere vain folly and presumption ; that the influence which has been so potent in the civilisation of the world, and that mighty commerce upon which even now depends the very existence of the teeming millions of our population—that these things would rest upon a more secure basis if, instead of being the United Kingdom, we were only an accidental combination of loosely associated States and provinces. Let them show this and we will listen to them, and perhaps they may convince us ; but I believe that we have still enough of the old courage and of the resolution of the race which has built up our Empire, which has welded together the mighty fabric which is the admiration of the world, not to be driven into concessions by the fear of outrage and disorder, or by weariness of the great task and the great duty which has been cast upon us. (Loud cheers.)

*GLASGOW LIBERAL CLUB, February 13th, 1889.*

AN APPEAL TO MODERATE GLADSTONIANS.

[During the month of February, 1889, Mr. Chamberlain visited Glasgow and addressed a vast meeting in the St. Andrew's Hall on Scotch and English Reforms. The next night he was entertained at dinner by the Glasgow Liberal Club, which includes members of both sections of the Liberal Party. As the accommodation was limited the places had to be balloted for. A large number of Gladstonians were present, and Ex-Lord Provost Ure, himself a Gladstonian, presided and proposed the health of their guest.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN said:— Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I thank you for the kindness with which you have received this toast. Above all I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the references which you have made—so flattering and so generous in their appreciation, so graceful in their terms—(hear, hear)—to my past public life and action. I feel that you have altogether exaggerated any merits of mine, but I can assure you that it is with the greatest pleasure that I receive this praise at the hands of one who has himself rendered eminent services to his fellow-citizens—(cheers)—and who shares my own deep appreciation of the importance and the dignity of municipal life. (Cheers.) Circumstances, rather than any will or desire of my own, caused me to relinquish it for the more stormy scenes of Imperial politics; but I can assure you, gentlemen, that even now I do not estimate the work of our local rulers as being of less importance or of less value than the work of our Imperial administrators. I am glad that you have seen fit to recall the time when I was Mayor of Birmingham. I assure you that there is no office which I have subsequently filled, there is no honour to which I can hereafter by any possibility be called, that would be to me more agreeable, that would carry in my mind higher dignity and authority than that which fell to me when I occupied the civic chair in the town of my adoption. I thank you all for having extended to me, with so much courtesy, the hospitality of the Liberal Club. I be-

lieve that on previous occasions this hospitality has been enjoyed by the leaders of what I suppose I may call another branch of the Liberal Party, and on all these occasions, and in every case, you have been mindful only of our common Liberalism. You have ignored those differences which unfortunately divide us, which have weakened in recent years the usefulness of party ties, and which, in some cases, have severed personal friendships. I think in doing this you have exhibited a spirit of conciliation which is wiser and more charitable than the spirit of some of those extremists who loudly call for excommunication, and who would, if they had the power, exclude from the congregation of the faithful everybody who differed from them, even if only on a single point. I appreciate your kindness, and I hope I shall be able to reciprocate it. I am quite ready, for a time at all events, to leave behind me those questions which necessarily require controversial treatment—(cheers)—and I do not think that ought to be difficult.

#### A RETROSPECT.

If I had happened to enjoy this privilege, and to be invited as your guest some three or four years ago, I imagine that we could have found no difficulty in discussing in the most friendly spirit many questions of the deepest importance and of the deepest national and personal interest. May we not, then, do well, for a few minutes at all events, to forget the intervening years, and revert to a more harmonious time? Even then, your chairman has reminded you we were not entirely agreed, or, as he has said, we belonged to a party whose creed recognised a certain amount of individual independence in its members, and expected from all of them strict adherence to conscientious conviction and the exercise of private judgment. Those days which I wish to recall were the days of a certain unauthorised programme which at that time caused a great deal of unreasonable alarm, but which now is regarded without the slightest apprehension even by the most timid of our arm-chair politicians. (Cheers and laughter.) At that time our differences, I think I am justified in saying, were not so much differences of principle as differences of degree. There was a difference as to the importance—the relative importance—of particular reforms, as to the order of precedence, as to the extent to which they should be pressed.



## THE UNAUTHORISED PROGRAMME.

I should like to remind you of the guiding idea of that programme. We were then, you will remember, on the eve of an impending change in the Constitution of the country, and for the very first time we were looking forward to the establishment of a Government in this country which should be more representative than any Government that had preceded it—a Government of the people, by the people, and for the people. It seemed to me then—and nothing has occurred since to change my conviction—that social questions would occupy us in the future more than grave constitutional changes. The object of Liberals for a long while had been to perfect the great instrument of legislation, and when we had done that, and sharpened our tools, surely it was only reasonable that we should turn attention to the work which these tools were intended to do, and that we should see that they were employed for the purposes for which we had taken so much trouble to fashion them. It seemed to me then that the jealousy of Government interference had become unreasonable. At last we had a Government which was not a Government of the classes, but a Government of the whole people, which would be intimately acquainted with the wants of the people, and closely allied to them in sympathy, and I thought that the policy of *laissez faire*, which was a natural policy, and popular with the political economists of an older generation, would become inconsistent with thorough democratic institutions. But I should also say that I thought that a Government of the kind I have described would have not only the power to deal with the great social questions, which had been left unsolved, but would be better qualified to do so than any government of privilege could possibly be; because it would have behind it popular sympathy, and authority, and force, which would enable it to reject impracticable ideas, which would enable it to cast aside the panaceas of quacks and fanatics, while it would recognise its responsibility, recognise its first duty to be to at once carry out what has always been in my mind the primary end and object of the Liberal programme—the greatest happiness to the greatest number. (Cheers.) I do not think that these social problems are very easy of solution. They baffled statesmen in the past, and we cannot approach them in any conceited or dogmatic spirit

but we may approach them with all the encouragement which can be derived from the experience of the past. Although we have not done all that we might have done, and although we shall leave much to our successors, I think a great deal has been accomplished, and we may derive from what we have done most useful lessons. What do I mean by social legislation? I mean legislation which is intended to raise the general condition of the people, which is intended for the material and intellectual improvement of the masses of our population.

#### FIFTY YEARS' PROGRESS.

Well, in our generation, within the time and memory of everybody here present, we have passed the Education Act, we have passed Sanitary Acts, Workshops Acts, Artisans' Dwellings Acts, Allotments Acts, and I might add to their number. These Acts have carried out with more or less completeness and success the principles that I desire to see established ; and looking back to the general result, we have every reason to be satisfied with what we have done in the past, and have every reason to be encouraged to do more in the future. (Cheers.) Consider for a moment the contrast between the state of things now and the state of things, say when our Queen came to the throne. Look at the state of education, at the enormous proportion of our population relatively which is now brought under our national system of instruction ; look at the lengthened expectation of life, as shown by the statistics of the insurance offices, which is due to the better conditions in which the poor live ; look at the marvellous diminution in crime, and especially in juvenile crime ; look at the increased consumption of all those articles of luxury and of necessity by the masses of the people, showing how much better is the average condition of the people. Wherever you turn there are signs of improvement, due, as I believe, to this beneficent legislation ; and I say that we may well hope that future results will be equally important. (Cheers.) I am not content to sit still. (Cheers.)

#### THE RESOURCES OF CIVILISATION NOT YET EXHAUSTED.

Your chairman has been kind enough to speak of what I have done in the past ; but I am not prepared to fold my arms in the

face of existing abuses because we have done much, for I am not satisfied that there is nothing still left to be done. I will quote a celebrated expression, and I will apply it to what I am saying: "We have not exhausted the resources of civilisation". (Cheers and laughter.) I think you will agree with me that education and temperance, and the industry and thrift which accompany the possession of property and which are connected with property in land—I say I think you will agree with me that these things are the most powerful agents for raising the general condition of the people. (Cheers.) I have spoken of the Education Act. I had a special interest in the agitation to which that Act was due, and looking back now I say, with all its defects, it is the greatest piece of beneficial legislation upon which any statesman can possibly congratulate himself in our time and generation. At the same time, it has always been to me a matter of sincere regret that we crippled the concession of this great boon by the imposition of a new tax—a burden which I have shown on other occasions is occasionally beyond the capacity of the working classes to support. I believe that the fee system which accompanies our national system of education is the greatest obstacle to the complete success of the Education Acts. I want to see the barrier removed. (Cheers.) I want to see in one way or another—I care very little myself about methods, I care more for the principle that I desire to see established—I want to see our working classes placed in the same position as the working classes of America, as the working classes of the Colonies, as the working classes of every civilised country in the world, and I want the door of every school throughout the land thrown open as early as possible.

#### TEMPERANCE REFORM.

Then there is the question of temperance. Here also I think we have reason to congratulate ourselves upon the progress that has already been made. Nobody who has studied this question, nobody who knows intimately the circumstances and the conditions of life of the working classes of this country, will deny that in the course of the last twenty years there has been a great and favourable change—that intemperance is less than it was, and, if it is common at all, it is in a lower grade than before. This great improvement has been

effected, but what is remarkable is that it has been effected without legislation ; because I venture to say that there never was in the history of this country a case before in which so powerful an organisation, so influentially supported with such numbers of supporters, with such Parliamentary and other influence, has accomplished so little in the way of legislation as has been accomplished by the temperance organisation of this country. (Cheers.) I do not think it is possible to point to any statutory enactments to which any considerable importance in this respect can possibly be attributed. Now, to-night I am pledged to avoid everything in the way of a controversial statement, and therefore I confine myself to a fact which I do not think anybody will deny. I do not say who is to blame, but I think I may venture to express the regret which I feel myself, having some claims to be a temperance reformer—although I admit I do not belong to the extreme section—that the opportunity which was offered the other day by the introduction of the Local Government Bill was lost, just as many years ago the opportunity offered by the introduction of the bill of Mr. Bruce, who is now Lord Aberdare, was also lost. I know the objections—and I appreciate the force of the objections—which were taken to the proposals in the Local Government Bill, but at the same time I assert that they were well worthy of the favourable consideration of the temperance party. In the first place, there was the proposal that the new local authorities should have absolute power to close public-houses on Sundays and on certain holidays. Surely, that was a most important principle. (Cheers.) Surely it was a principle which, if it had been once established, and, if it had been found on application to be advantageous, might have been in the future considerably extended. Then it was also proposed to enable those local authorities to prevent the granting of any new licenses. That was another principle to which, I believe, every member of the temperance party is committed, and I very much regret that it does not form part of the statutes of the country.

#### THE QUESTION OF COMPENSATION.

And, lastly, there was the proposal, of still greater importance in some respects, to enable those local authorities if they were supported

by the public opinion of their several districts, to carry out in practice that principle of local option which has hitherto united every temperance reformer, and either to reduce the number of public-houses, or, if they saw fit to abolish public-houses altogether upon payment of a reasonable compensation. I know perfectly well the objection taken to the payment of any compensation. (Cheers.) I think I understand the underlying reason. I take it that there are very few even of the extreme reformers who would not feel a certain amount of sympathy with any man who has carried on for years a legal trade if he were turned out into the streets at middle age, or advanced in years, to find a new means of subsistence for himself and family. I do not believe, therefore, that there are any temperance reformers who would object to a reasonable compensation to a man so treated in the public interest. Unless I am mistaken, the underlying reason for this objection is that it is feared that if this compensation be provided by the ratepayers, the ratepayers may be unwilling to exercise the powers entrusted to them, either to reduce or abolish public-houses in their district. But if I am right in that, I would point out to you that these proposals in the bill were not proposals like the laws of the Medes and Persians, which could not be altered. It would have been a perfectly possible thing to have amended and improved them. There was one provision which, I think, hardly received sufficient attention, under which it was proposed to increase the license duty upon public-houses, and to put aside a sum which would have been received for the increased license duty, and which would have amounted to £300,000 a year, and to use it for the purpose of reducing the number of licensed houses by paying compensation to those who were bought up. It was said that £300,000 a year was a mere flea-bite, that it was a small matter in connection with the vastness of the evil which had to be dealt with. Well, as a practical statesman, as well as an advanced Radical, I am never disposed to sneer at trifles like £300,000 a year—(laughter)—and I consider that if the temperance party had been agreed they might easily have increased the sum. I do not believe there would have been any serious objection on the part of the House of Commons to have still further increased the license-duty. That, at all events, would have given us a fund from which it would have been possible to reduce the excessive number of public-houses throughout the United Kingdom, and

thereby reduce the excessive competition of trade, which is one of the great causes of intemperance. Well, gentlemen, I have given you my views very frankly. I do not know that you will be inclined to agree with me—at all events to agree with everything I have said—but at least you will agree with me in this : that this temperance question, which has been mooted and debated for years, is ripe for some kind of settlement. (Cheers.) It would be well for the Liberal party, at all events, to put this question in the first rank of possible reform.

#### REFORM OF THE LAND LAWS.

The other matter to which I have referred was the desirability of increasing the number of holders of the land. I need not in a Liberal audience say anything about the advantages which we expect to accrue from such reform as has been ardently desired by all reformers from the first creation of the Radical party. The older Radicals, Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, attached the greatest importance to this question. They anticipated very satisfactory results from what is now called free land ; that is to say, from the removal of all restrictions upon the cultivation of the soil and the transfer of the land. I have never doubted for a moment the advantage of such a change as that. We have already gone a long way in that direction, and at the present time there is not really much serious difficulty in the disposal of land. The old restrictions have been to a large extent removed. For my part, I hope the day is very near when the remaining restrictions will be entirely removed. (Cheers.) But, believe me, the object we have in view will not be met by the removal of those restrictions alone. I am perfectly convinced that merely to make the land freely saleable, freely transferable, will not materially alter the classes of people who now occupy and possess the land. The causes which have been at work, and which have produced the dispersion of the yeoman class—at one time the best class of the population of England and Scotland—are much deeper than has been generally supposed. I do not believe that they will be affected by any such alteration as the reforms advocated by Cobden and Bright. If you want to re-create the yeoman class, which has almost disappeared by natural and economic causes, and is bound gradually to disappear at all times and under all circumstances, you must stimulate and tempt other persons to occupy

their places, and I am perfectly convinced that you cannot effect your object without the intervention of the State. If it is an object which is of national importance—if it affects the security of the country, if it affects the stability of all that is vital and valuable in our institutions—then I say it would be worthy of the State, as representing the whole community, to step in and offer encouragement and special facilities in order to replace upon the land that class of cultivators of the soil who formerly were the greatest strength of the empire. (Cheers.)

### THE IRISH QUESTION BLOCKS THE WAY.

Gentlemen, you will believe me, I am sure, when I say how gladly I would see the Liberal party once more united—(cheers)—and co-operating for these great reforms. You will say, probably, that the Irish question blocks the way. I find myself again restricted by the limits which your courtesy and my own good sense—(renewed laughter)—impose upon me. I cannot enter upon matters of controversy, and therefore, although you will allow me to say that I am not prepared to accept your statement without qualification, yet I will assume, for the purposes of my present argument, that the Irish question does block the way. Is it impossible even in these circumstances to make any progress? Are we condemned to remain as at present, in a position in which a man's greatest foes are those of his own household? What is it which separates us on the Irish question? I think sometimes some of the people who are doing their best to foment differences would be very much surprised if they were called upon to put upon paper the exact extent of these differences. (Cheers.) I should say that we differ only upon one branch of the Irish question; that is to say, with regard to the propriety of extending what is called Home Rule to Ireland; and that while the Liberal-Unionists are prepared to agree to almost any conceivable development of municipal and provincial institutions—(hear, hear)—the other branch of the Liberal party are prepared to go further, even to the extent of basing this extension of local government upon the principle of nationality. I am not able to argue the question. I think it useful at such a time as this to state the problem. Let us understand, at all events, before we come to blows again—(laughter)—what it is we are going to fight about. We are going to fight, so far as I know, upon that point, and

that point alone. While a considerable proportion of the Liberal party will not grant institutions founded upon the conception of a separate nationality to what they believe to be the integral part of one nationality—namely, the nationality of the United Kingdom—there is another important branch of the Liberal party that is willing to take this risk and make this concession. Well, let us suppose—I am obliged to suppose by the necessities of my position—(laughter)—that this is a difference which we are unable to bridge over. I am not myself convinced of that. I am not convinced that if we were able, as independent Liberals, to discuss this question, putting aside altogether all the personal bitterness which has been imported into it, and which is outside the main issue, I am not certain that we could not come to an agreement. (Cheers.) But, gentlemen, I will assume, for the sake of peace, that we are irreconcilable on this branch of the question—(laughter)—but then there are other branches of the question upon which I unhesitatingly say we are agreed.

#### A POINT OF AGREEMENT—THE LAND QUESTION.

This question of local government in Ireland is not the first in point of importance—it is not the first in point of time. I take it for granted that everybody here will agree that among the primary causes of discontent in Ireland are to be found the poverty of the people—(hear, hear)—their exclusive devotion to one branch of industry—namely, to agriculture, and the constant friction which has existed for centuries between the landlords and the people; and I am sure we shall also agree that any change which could alter this state of things would be desirable in itself, independently of everything else—(hear, hear)—that it would be desirable on its own merits, and that such change is absolutely necessary before you can proceed to any other part of the question. I say, whether you are a Home Ruler of the most extreme kind, or whether you are a Liberal Unionist of the most limited kind—(laughter)—in every case this conclusion stares you in the face: you must deal with this social, economical, and agrarian question before you can hope to deal successfully with any branch of the question. If you are a Home Ruler you will agree with Mr. John Morley, who wrote a year or two ago in the *Nineteenth Century* that the land question interested the Irish people more than



all the other questions put together : and you will agree under the same circumstances with Mr. Parnell, who spoke at Drogheda in 1884, and said that if the Irish question was to be settled on a constitutional basis the land question must be settled before the national question was approached. If you are, on the contrary, a Liberal Unionist, you will agree with Lord Hartington or myself that the settlement of the land question is desirable in itself, and that possibly if the land question were settled we should not hear much of the Home Rule question, or if we did hear about it it would be in a modified and less intense form, in which, possibly all parties might find a basis of arrangement. What Mr. Gladstone thinks on the question may be understood from the fact that he risked the fate of his Government in 1886 upon a bill whose object was to take the land question out of the sphere of the new Parliament which he proposed to establish in Ireland, and to settle it by making the tenants the owners of the land. I say one and all of us, and every section of the party, are agreed as to what ought to be done, and as to the necessity of this particular branch of reform. (Cheers.) I have not said anything at present—because I am speaking to-night to Liberals—I have not said anything about Conservative opinions ; but I may add in passing that I do not believe there would be any difficulty in getting the vast majority of Conservatives to accept any reasonable proposal for settling the land question. It is rather outside the scope of my present argument to consider the other party in this matter ; but at least, I may point out that a reform of this kind would meet with less opposition and difficulty in the House of Commons than probably any other reform upon which the Liberal party are agreed.

#### OBJECTIONS TO MR. GLADSTONE'S LAND BILL.

What was the cause of the opposition to Mr. Gladstone's Land Bill ? I think if you will read the speeches both at the time of the introduction of the bill and afterwards in the country, you will find that there was not one single word said by any opponent against the principle of the bill. I do not think there was one single word of opposition to the proposal to make the tenants of Ireland the owners of the soil they cultivated. The only objection was to the method, which some of us thought would impose a serious risk

upon the taxpayers of Great Britain. (Cheers.) I am not enquiring whether we were right or wrong, I am only saying that that was the motive of the Opposition, and, so far as I know, no single opponent ever put any other motive forward. Well, can that risk be avoided?

#### A SAFE SCHEME OF LAND PURCHASE.

Can we propound a scheme which would carry out this object upon which Conservatives, and Liberals, and Radicals, and Parnellites all agree, and at the same time avoid this risk, which was fatal to Mr. Gladstone's Bill? I say we can—(cheers)—and I do not say so because I am confident in my own judgment, I say so because I have the authority of those who differ from me seriously upon many other branches of the subject. I do not know whether you can recall to mind the speech delivered by Mr. Morley at Ipswich a few months ago. On that occasion he referred to the Round-table Conference, and he said that although at the time of that conference we were not actually agreed, yet we were in sight of one another. I think if you would refer to the speeches delivered at the time by Sir William Harcourt, Lord Herschell, and Sir George Trevelyan, you will find that they said much the same thing; and I entirely concur in what they say. (Cheers.) I believe at that time that, so far as we were concerned, we were on the road to complete agreement. About the same time, there was a dinner-party in London, which Mr. Gladstone attended, and at that dinner-party he used very remarkable words. He referred to his Land Bill, and he said that although he had not himself changed his opinion that the security which he offered was ample, yet that he recognised the strength of the objection on the ground of the risk that might be imposed upon the British taxpayer; and he added, further, that he was now of opinion that the object might be secured without recourse to British credit, and without imposing any risk upon British taxpayers. Would it not be desirable and useful that the details of any scheme which would effect this object should be published and submitted for public criticism. For my part I desire sincerely to contribute to such a result. You know that at the Round-table Conference we agreed that our discussion should be private, and it was not open to any member of that conference to disclose what passed without the authority of his colleagues.

What I wish to say to-night is, that so far as I am concerned, I remove every restriction. I invite my colleagues to publish what passed at the Round-table Conference. As Mr. Morley said, if we were not actually agreed we were in sight of one another. (Cheers.) I invite them to publish, for instance, the written scheme of land reform in Ireland which was submitted to that conference. I should have not the slightest objection to the publication at the same time of so much of our discussion as bore upon the question of local government, though I think it would be found that upon that matter there were greater differences of opinions; but as regards the land question I can conceive of nothing but good which would flow from the reference to public opinion of the proposals which were discussed, and which, at all events, commended themselves very greatly to the minds of those who were engaged in that discussion.

#### THE HARVEST IS RIPE.

I ask you now to consider the result of what I have been saying to you. I began by pointing out to you that there remains a great part of the Liberal programme unfulfilled. The harvest is ripe, it is the reapers only who are wanting, who stand aside contesting among themselves. I have admitted, for the sake of argument, that the one obstacle of co-operation in these useful and beneficial reforms is the present condition of the Irish question. I have pointed out that the Irish question consists of several branches, and that while there may be differences as to one of those branches, there may be no difference in principle as to the others, as to those which are most important. I ask you in these circumstances why should we be continually condemned to inaction? Why should not we take those steps which it is within our power to take? Why should not we leave to the future those points of difference upon which difference may still remain among us? What would you say to a firm that was overloaded with orders, whose customers were pressing for the execution of those orders, and one of the partners in which should say, "No; I will close my mill; I will execute none of my orders, because one of my partners objects to the execution of a particular order which he considers quite exceptional in its character, and which has been given by a customer whose solvency he doubts". Gentlemen, I will not venture

to predict what may follow upon such an appeal as I now make to you, not for the first time. I admit that we who are by your courtesy called the leaders of the Liberal party have failed to come to an arrangement; but I am not certain that if the subjects of difference were clearly submitted to the rank and file, and if they would try their hand, I am not certain but they might be more successful. In any case, or whatever may be the fortunes of the Liberal party as a party organisation, I, at all events, have confidence unshaken in the Liberalism by which it ought to be animated. I believe that the desire for progress, and the passionate hatred of abuses which has inspired the reformers of the past, will outlast our temporary differences, and will be to all time a powerful and pervading influence in the history and destinies of this country. (Loud cheers.)

*WEST BIRMINGHAM, January 23rd, 1889.*

## A RESPITE IN THE AGITATION.

[On January 23rd, Mr. Chamberlain delivered his annual address to his constituents at a crowded meeting in the Town Hall. After referring to his mission to Washington, and discussing various British reforms, Mr. Chamberlain concluded his speech by the following reference to the Irish question :—]

AND now let me say a word on this question of Ireland, which I have relegated to a second place. (Hear, hear.) I do not deny that it is entitled to a fair share of attention. I am not afraid that its representatives will allow it to be forgotten. (Laughter.) But I object to allow it to monopolise the whole of our time—(hear, hear)—and I say that, after the experience of the last six or seven years, we may well ask now that other needs and other claims, just as urgent as those of Ireland, should receive a due share of consideration. (Cheers.) This is all the more possible, because it is undoubted that there is a great improvement, morally, socially, and materially, in the present condition of Ireland. That is manifest, palpable. It cannot be gainsaid or denied. The returns of the banks—and especially of the savings banks—the reports of the railway companies, the statistics of the general trade of the country, and above all, the diminution in agrarian crime, all point to the same conclusion. And I am even sanguine enough to hope that, if this continues, as it may, we shall be entering upon another tranquil period of Irish history, less sensational, but infinitely more satisfactory than that through which we have just passed. (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, what are we going to do with it? What use will English statesmen make of this period of respite, if happily it should be afforded to us? What are the causes of the improvement which has undoubtedly taken place? I should yield at once a large place to the wise and firm and resolute administration of Mr. Balfour. (Loud cheers.) Mr. Balfour has shown the greatest courage and the greatest ability. He has administered the law equally. (Hear, hear.) He has been

no respecter of persons. ("Hear, hear," and cheers.) I see attempts on the part of the Gladstonian press to evoke the indignation of the country, because members of Parliament, gentlemen of education and of official position, have been sent to gaol for breaking the law. ("Serve them right," and cheers.) I hope you will reserve your indignation for those persons who, knowing better, and who, having every interest and every obligation to uphold the authority of the law, have allowed themselves to put it at defiance. (Cheers.) I say that Mr. Balfour's courage—(hisses and cheers)—I thought courage was an English virtue. (Loud cheers.) How long is it since Englishmen have learned to hiss it? (Prolonged cheers and renewed hisses.) I say that Mr. Balfour, by his courage, by his indifference to the taunts and the abuse, and the threats which have assailed him, has done much to secure that hereafter the law of the land shall prevail in Ireland over the law of the League. (Cheers.)

#### FORCE NO REMEDY FOR NATIONAL DISCONTENT.

But I suppose that Mr. Balfour himself would be the first to admit that there are also other causes for the improvement to which I have referred. And, gentlemen, surely in this hall it is not necessary for me to bring to your memory the well-known words of Mr. Bright—(cheers)—that, although force may be necessary in order to secure respect for the law, force is no remedy for national discontent. (Hear, hear.) I will go further, and say that, wherever the employment of force becomes necessary—that thereby an obligation is thrown upon those who use it to seek out the causes that have made it necessary—the causes of discontent—and to find the remedy, which lies at the root of them. Now, I have said there were other reasons for the improvement upon which I have been congratulating you. There is, in the first instance, the effect of the remedial measures of the last few years. It would, indeed, be a melancholy thing if, after having devoted years to passing these measures, after having accepted the assurances which have been given to us by their authors and promoters, we should find that they were powerless to deal with the evils against which they were directed. And, lastly, gentlemen, there is also the rise in the price of all agricultural produce, which has relieved Ireland, at all events, from the worst effects of agricultural depression. If that rise

continues, I have no doubt that prosperity will be again assured to Ireland, and that we may expect that peace and comparative content, at all events, will prevail. But do not let us deceive ourselves. If prices should again fall to their former level, once more you would have the old conflict between the tenant who cannot get subsistence from the land and the landlord who claims his rent ; once more you would have discontent with the Government and with the law which enforces the obligation of this debt. I say, then, under these circumstances, it appears to me to be our duty to see if something cannot be done, some further remedy be devised, which will cut at the root of this ever-present cause of discontent.

#### MR. GLADSTONE'S PROPOSALS EXAMINED.

Now, what are the Gladstonian proposals? You know what they amount to. The Gladstonians suggest to you that you should shirk all responsibility, that you should leave the solution of this great economical problem, which has baffled the statesmen of past generations, to a Parliament in Dublin, whose aims, objects, and methods would be revolutionary, and which would be elected by, and representative of, the forces of the National League. Well, gentlemen, we Unionists have said, and do say, that this is no settlement at all—(hear, hear)—that it is only an aggravation of our difficulties. We say that a separate Parliament in Dublin must inevitably tend to become independent—(hear, hear)—that we should be putting in the hands of those who were, by their own confession, a short time ago, the enemies of this country, the power to do us deadly harm. (Applause.) And we say that we will not run this risk. (Cheers.) We appeal to history—history, that Mr. Gladstone continually quotes—to prove that this would be the inevitable result of the course which he proposes. Then we say, in the next place, that the North of Ireland—Protestant, prosperous, and loyal—(cheers)—would never submit, without civil war, to the control of a Parliament of the South—Catholic, poverty-stricken, and discontented. (Cheers.) And, lastly, we say that this policy, against which we are contending, is founded on the hope of the confiscation of private property, and that to give it the strength and authority of Parliamentary institutions, to place it in a majority in the control of the government of Ireland, would be to

inaugurate a policy which would commence with the spoliation of individuals, and which would end in the repudiation of all obligations to the British Crown and to the British taxpayer. (Cheers.)

#### AN ALTERNATIVE POLICY.

These are our objections; but I do not think that we ought to stop there. It is not enough to occupy a negative position. We reject the proposals of our opponents. They have a right to call upon us, and it is our duty to find proposals of our own. (Cheers.) Now, is there no alternative to this policy of surrender and despair? I say there is. I say the causes—the chief causes—of discontent in Ireland are now what they always have been: the poverty of the country, and the land-hunger which prevails amongst a population the largest proportion of which depends entirely upon the land for their means of subsistence. Can we do nothing to relieve the one and to satisfy the other? We can do what a rich country may do for a poor one with which it is linked in indissoluble bonds. It behoves us if we value the Union to make the Union beneficial to all portions of the United Kingdom; and as there is no other country in the world except England which has ever been able to promote and carry through its public works without the co-operation of the State, so we, because we are England, ought not to deny to Ireland the privileges and advantages which she would have if she were united to any other civilised country. We ought, on the contrary, to assist Ireland with all the advantages which our wealth and our credit give us. We ought to be willing to make an investment—which, in my opinion, would carry with it no risk—in the prosperity and the well-being of the country whose fortunes we desire to unite with our own. The policy of giving facilities for stimulating the industry and the agriculture of Ireland is a policy which is an essential part of the maintenance of the Union, and I need not dwell upon it, because it is a policy which has been accepted by the Government. In the last session of Parliament they brought in some bills dealing with one branch of the subject, and I hope and believe that they will deal with other branches in the next session. But mark this. This policy has been demanded by Irishmen from the time of O'Connell down to the present day—demanded by Irishmen of all



parties. It is called for in the interests of Ireland, and it only failed in the last session of Parliament because of the opposition of Irishmen and their allies in the Gladstonian party. It is clear that we cannot expect them to help us in removing the discontent of Ireland. They are interested in maintaining that discontent. (Applause.) They have told you that it is their policy to make our government of Ireland impossible. Gentlemen, let us defeat their intentions. (Cheers.) If they oppose these measures it is because they believe that by adding to the material prosperity of the country we should cut the ground from under their feet. Let us remove the cause of agitation. Let us cut off at the root the influence of the agitators, and we shall have done much for the peace and the tranquillity of the kingdom. (Applause.)

#### LAND PURCHASE.

Well, then, there is the second—the still greater question—the question of the land; and as to that I say that the success which has already attended the experiment of the Ashbourne Act justifies a larger measure, and that we should endeavour to secure a great—I do not say a universal, but at all events a very large transfer of ownership from the landlord to the tenant. That was the object of Mr. Gladstone's bill, and Mr. Gladstone's bill was only defeated because it was felt that the risk of his proposal was too great, and that it was not fair to pledge the resources of this country for an Irish object of that description. It is one thing to advance ten millions as an experiment; it would be another thing altogether to advance 150 millions on Irish land at a time when the leaders of the Irish people are threatening that they will, as soon as they have the power, repudiate their obligations. (Applause.) But, gentlemen, we have shown, in articles which have been published, under the title of "A Unionist Policy for Ireland," in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, and which have subsequently been reprinted by the National Liberal Union—we have shown, I say, that this object can be accomplished without having recourse to English resources or British credit: that it can be carried out having regard solely to Irish credit and Irish resources. I do not press this plan now. All I say is that this plan, or a better if it can be found, ought to be adopted; and that it is the duty of the Government, and the duty of the Unionist party—the responsibility

of which I am the first to accept—to carry out some scheme by which we may hope to terminate the agrarian struggle which has gone on for centuries in Ireland, and which threatens to revive at every moment when agricultural depression resumes its course.

#### AN EMPIRE OF SWAGGER.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am afraid that I have occupied your time too long. (Cheers.) But I can assure you I am drawing to a conclusion. I wish very much that I could expect and anticipate the assistance of former friends and colleagues in preparing and carrying out the reforms—both those which concern Great Britain and those which concern Ireland—to which I have called your attention. It would be a national gain in the case of Ireland if all parties could lay aside for a time their party struggles, and could agree to seek some solution of this problem which has agitated us so long. (Hear, hear.) But, gentlemen, I admit I am not very sanguine of such assistance. I ask myself sometimes, how comes it that so many Liberals have suddenly deserted the ancient paths of Liberalism, have abandoned all efforts at reform of abuses, all attempt to meet legitimate and reasonable demands, and have suddenly thrown up the sponge and surrendered everything to those who were their former enemies? And I confess it seems to me that the gulf between us is greater and deeper than the Irish question, and that at the bottom there lies a radical distinction in our several conceptions of the duty of a great State and a great Government. There is a school of modern philosophy, of which the literary representative is Mr. John Morley—(hisses and cheers)—which shrinks from national obligations, and which, like Pilate, would wash its hands of national responsibility. The timorous spirit which they have shown in this proposal to abandon Ireland to anarchy finds its counterpart in the feeling which sees only wanton and unwise aggression in the constant growth and expansion of our empire. In the history of the past, of its growth and development, Mr. Morley sees nothing to be proud of; he sees only what he calls, with a flourish of tawdry rhetoric, an empire of swagger. (Hear, hear.) What, gentlemen? This great dominion, which has sent forth free nations to every corner of the globe, which holds now under its temperate and orderly sway myriads of men of hostile races; who owe

all their hopes of tranquillity and prosperity to the continuance of our rule—(cheers)—which has spread civilisation, which has developed commerce till it is competent to support the crowded millions that inhabit this small island, which otherwise would be altogether insufficient to maintain them—this great machine of progress, this potent force in the history of the world—to Mr. Morley's philosophic mind—(laughter)—is only an empire of swagger—(laughter)—an empire whose growth he deplures, but cannot restrain. (Loud cheering.) In the seven years during which this great Irish agitation has lasted, and during the latter portion of which Mr. Morley and his friends have been endeavouring to get rid of Ireland, we have added to the dominions of the Queen a population as large as that of Ireland, and an area twenty times as great. (Cheers.) He cannot prevent the tree from branching; but he would if he could injure the trunk and strike a fatal blow at the root. (Cries of "Shame," and loud cheers.) The issues which you are called upon to decide are momentous; they involve the principles of our national existence. (Hear, hear.) Apply the policy which these men advocate in Ireland to the government of our great dependency of India. Our opponents seem, from signs which have recently been manifested, not disinclined to do so, and if they succeed I will venture to predict that in a few years the ordered peace of two hundred and fifty millions of our fellow-subjects will give way to the anarchy of the empire of the Mogul, or to the gospel of plunder that was preached by the Mahratta chieftains. It is not, believe me, a policy of Home Rule alone that we have to resent and to resist—it is a policy of universal disintegration. (Loud and prolonged cheering.) That is a policy against which I will continue to protest—(renewed cheering)—and I have confidence that the people of this country, when its aim and object are made clear to them, will, with their old characteristics, their pride, and resolution, and power of stubborn resistance, which have carried them through so many crises and so many dangers, come out of the difficulties by which they may now be assailed, and will maintain intact and undefiled the splendour of an empire which it has cost much to win, but which is still worthy of all the sacrifices that its sons may make. (Loud and enthusiastic cheering, during which the right hon. gentleman resumed his seat, having spoken for an hour and a quarter.)

*DUNDEE, February 14th, 1889.*

## HOME RULE IN SCOTLAND AND IRELAND.

[From Glasgow Mr. Chamberlain proceeded to Dundee, where he addressed a crowded meeting in the Kinnaird Hall, over which Lord Camperdown presided. Mr. Barclay, M.P., moved, and Mr. G. W. Baxter seconded a resolution expressing confidence in the Liberal Unionist leaders and welcoming Mr. Chamberlain to Dundee, which was carried amid loud cheering, with a few dissentient expressions.]

My lord, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you sincerely for the resolution which you have just passed with such considerable unanimity. I am here to-night in pursuance of an old promise that I would take the first opportunity to pay a political visit to Dundee. (Applause.) Your chairman, I think, has complained that you are in a sort of political siding. I was not aware of any disadvantage of that kind, but, as far as I am concerned, I have always looked forward with pleasure to the chance of having an opportunity of conferring with the sturdy Radicals of Dundee. (Cheers.) But at the time my promise was made you were represented excellently by my old friend, Mr. William Edward Baxter. (Cheers.) While I am very sorry for the circumstances which prevent Mr. Baxter from being present to-night, I cannot but wish to convey to him my own opinion, and I think it will be the opinion of the meeting, that his place has been most admirably supplied by his son. (Cheers.) Ladies and gentlemen, I have said that I was glad to think, in those days when I first made my promise to come among you, that I should have the opportunity of speaking to the Radicals of Dundee. You know there are many kinds of Radicalism. (Laughter.) There is the constructive Radicalism which seeks by practical legislation to raise the condition, to improve the moral and intellectual position of the working classes, and of the masses of the

people ; and then there is what I must call the shrieking Radicalism —(laughter)—which is always engaged in the pursuit of impossible ideals, and cannot spare any time for practical and reasonable questions of legislation. I do not think that the latter, at all events, is characteristic of the sober Liberalism of Scotland, and therefore, although I am perfectly well aware in coming to Dundee now that I am coming to a place where the majority of Liberals differ very materially from the views which I entertain, yet I can appeal to you confidently for a patient and a calm and a quiet hearing while I endeavour to put before you some facts and arguments bearing upon the decision which you are called upon to take and divested of all rhetorical and dramatic exaggeration.

#### AN APPEAL TO REASON.

No one will doubt that the issue which we are called upon to decide is most momentous in its character, and that it cannot be put aside. I know that there is a class of politicians who, in dealing with this Irish question, are anxious to wash their hands of the whole business, and are willing to place their consciences in the keeping of one great statesman, and to trust to his judgment, and to take the risk of what he may provide for them. Gentlemen, the question is too important for this. (Cheers.) It affects us all too intimately in our deepest and most personal interest to justify us in exhibiting such confidence towards any man, however great, however able, however capable he may be. I want you to decide the question on its merits. I want you to approach it with full regard to the great national interest involved, and not to judge it upon subsidiary or collateral issues. You know there is always a danger in a matter of this kind that we should be drawn aside to the consideration of incidents which may be very sensational, but which have nothing whatever to do with the main issue. That is especially the case in regard to an Irish question, because, gentlemen, whatever virtues the Irish people have, it is undoubted that they are an excessively dramatic and an excessively excitable people, and sometimes I am afraid that our Gladstonian friends, having allied themselves with the Celtic people, have caught the contagion. (Laughter.) We have some illustrations of that. At all events some good men have gone very wrong in recent times. (Laughter.)

## SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN.

As I came here to-day I read with a great deal of amusement, and not without a spice of contempt, the speech which was delivered last night by Sir George Trevelyan in Bridgeton. (Hisses and slight cheering.) Sir George Trevelyan is one of those men who are very apt to mistake exaggeration of sentiment for force of character—(laughter and cheers)—and he is never so happy as when he has got himself into a frenzy of hysterical emotion. (Cheers.) He made a long speech last night, which was filled with feminine spite and petty personalities, but which did not contain one single fact or argument to explain what we are so anxious to hear from him. (Cheers.) How is it that a change has taken place, and that Sir George Trevelyan, whom we knew in 1886 as the Unionist martyr, who was ready to retire into private life rather than surrender to the prophets of anarchy and disorder, has become transformed into the Sir George Trevelyan of 1887, who accepted the seat for Bridgeton at the expense of all his former convictions and principles. (Cheers.) Sir George Trevelyan was very lachrymose last night over poor Mr. Harrington. Has Sir George Trevelyan forgotten that when he was in power, only two or three years ago, in Ireland, this same Mr. Harrington—poor Mr. Harrington—(laughter)—or his brother—I am not quite certain—was put into prison with six months of hard labour for a political offence in connection with the editing of the paper of which he is the proprietor. Well, gentlemen, in face of inconsistencies such as these let us leave Sir George Trevelyan. If he pleases to stand before his Irish audience in Bridgeton in sack-cloth and ashes—(laughter)—with a white sheet and a candle—(loud laughter)—let him do penance for a tyranny which exceeds anything which is alleged against Mr. Balfour. (Cheers.) We cannot afford to waste time upon this political weathercock. (Cheers and laughter.) We cannot afford to be diverted from serious argument by such observations as those to which he treated his hearers last night.

## MR. O'BRIEN'S CASE.

But Sir George Trevelyan is not the only politician who is much concerned for the sufferings of the Irish patriots. Poor Mr. Harrington excites compassion amongst many more people than Sir

George Trevelyan. As you have observed, there has been recently a deliberate effort to get up an atrocity agitation on the subject of Mr. O'Brien's clothes. Now, I think if you have studied the Gladstonian resolutions upon this subject, you will be amazed at the power of the English—and shall I say the Scottish?—language. It appears as though these gentlemen, when they consider this great subject of Mr. O'Brien's imprisonment, take down a dictionary of abuse, pick out a score of the loudest and most violent adjectives they can find, and then apply the terms either to Mr. Balfour or the Liberal Unionists. We need not be ourselves much disturbed by this vituperation. We know what it means. We have heard it all before. The adjectives which are used so copiously with reference to our conduct are exactly the same adjectives which were used a few years ago to Lord Spencer, Sir George Trevelyan, and even Mr. Gladstone himself. (Cheers.) We know it is only the way in which these Irish politicians express their political differences from us, and that if we hereafter have the good fortune to agree with them, they will forget all this abuse, and, like Mr. O'Brien, they will be willing to black our boots. (Laughter.) Now, I want you to consider, as very much has been made of it, this grave case of Mr. O'Brien on its merits. Let us treat as seriously as we possibly can a subject of the kind. Mr. O'Brien was condemned by a court of law, by two magistrates—that same kind of court which sits upon the majority of the offences which are tried either in Scotland or in England—(cheers)—and he was condemned for an offence against the law. Nobody denies for a moment—Mr. O'Brien himself boasts of the fact—that he deliberately broke the law. (Hear, hear.) Now the Gladstonians represent Mr. O'Brien as a political offender. He was nothing of the kind. (Cheers.) There is no such thing as a political offence under the Crimes Act. (Hear, hear.) What Mr. O'Brien did was to denounce land-grabbers in a district in which outrages had been frequent, and in which to denounce a man was to point him out for the people who commit outrages and crimes. (Cheers.) Again and again a speech of that kind—I am not dealing with Mr. O'Brien's motive at all—but a speech of that kind has been followed by crime and outrage, by violence and assassination. (Cheers.) The land-grabber whom Mr. O'Brien denounced was a decent, industrious workman—not a rich man, not a landlord, not a member of the

classes, but a working man—(cheers)—who was desirous of finding subsistence for himself and family, and who was willing to take a farm at a fair rent fixed for him by a judicial and an impartial tribunal. (Cheers.) But he was willing to take a farm from which previously someone had been evicted who had been either unable or unwilling to pay his rent for years. For this offence, for this crime—because this man was seeking a livelihood in perfectly legal circumstances—Mr. O'Brien denounced him in public, and said to his audience, "You will know how to deal with him". (Hear, hear, and a voice, "Shame".) He said that in a district in which already men who had committed no greater offence had been dealt with by being shot down on their own hearths in the face of their wives and their families. If Mr. O'Brien had made a speech of that kind in any other civilised country in the world, I say that the punishment which was awarded him the other day in the court at Clonmel was a mere fleabite to what he would have had to suffer. (Cheers.) However, he was committed under these circumstances, and he was sentenced to four months' imprisonment. He took advantage of the courtesy which was shown to him by the court in which the trial took place—he, in the first place, created a disturbance in the neighbourhood of the courthouse, and then ran away from the police and from the results of his conviction. He disappeared for a week, and there have been all kinds of most interesting and imaginative accounts of what became of him during the interval. All we know is that he turned up again at a meeting in Manchester, where again the most violent language was used, and that being in England and not in Ireland the police took possession of their prisoner, and after affording to him every reasonable accommodation in Manchester, had him conveyed to the place in which he was to suffer his imprisonment.

#### MR. O'BRIEN'S CLOTHES.

When Mr. O'Brien got there, he considered that it would be a degradation to him to put on the prison dress. I daresay, gentlemen, that you do not know what the prison dress is. (Laughter.) But having myself—(renewed laughter)—had some acquaintance with the inside of a prison—(laughter)—at all events, as a visiting magistrate, I can assure you that the dress is in itself in no way



degrading, and that, on the contrary, it is more comfortable and more decent than the dress which a great number of working-people are forced to wear. (Cheers.) However, what I wish to say is, that in my opinion the degradation of imprisonment depends entirely on the offence for which you are imprisoned. (Cheers.) If to hold up a man to the odium of his fellow-citizens at a time when such conduct is calculated to put his life in danger, if that is an act of patriotism, all I can say is that there is no degradation in being in prison for it; but if, as I hold, it is one of the basest offences which a man can commit—(hear, hear)—then there is degradation in the offence, but there is no additional degradation in the punishment which a man suffers in consequence of the offence. (Cheers.) However, Mr. O'Brien sees no degradation in the offence. He professes to be willing to meet his punishment; but one thing at which he sticks is to change his clothes. (Laughter.) You know how Mr. Balfour—(loud cheers, again and again renewed)—who has been the mark of so much undeserved abuse, you know how he has treated Mr. O'Brien. He has treated him like a wilful child, who is not to be held responsible for all his actions. (Laughter.) In the first instance, Mr. Balfour was no more responsible for Mr. O'Brien's treatment than you are, or than I am. That treatment was regulated by the ordinary discipline of the prison, and everybody who goes to prison has to submit to that discipline, and many better men than Mr. O'Brien have submitted to it uncomplainingly. (Cheers.) But Mr. Balfour thought—and I think very wisely—that it was not worth making a great affair of so small a question as Mr. O'Brien's small-clothes—(laughter)—and accordingly he arranged that Mr. O'Brien should be transferred to the infirmary, where he is allowed to have better food than other prisoners, and where he is treated with every possible consideration. I have gone at some length into this matter because so much importance is attached to it by our opponents. (Hear, hear.) But is it not perfectly ridiculous that you should be asked to treat Mr. O'Brien as a martyr—that you should be asked to put him in the same rank as those Irish patriots of the past who laid down their lives for their country, because he refused to wear the prison clothing? (Cheers.) Is it not even more preposterous that you should be supposed to be capable of being influenced in deciding questions upon which your own existence, the future and the prosperity of

your country depend, by such a paltry question as a matter of this kind. (Hear, hear.)

#### A C O N T R A S T .

Do you remember that simultaneously with this so-called outrage on Mr. O'Brien, there came to us the news of an outrage of a very different character, when an inspector of police, a man who was universally respected in his neighbourhood, who was admirable in all the relations of life, and who was carrying out the duty imposed upon him by the law, was brutally murdered by a violent mob, called together by the incitements to which the leaders of the Parnellite party have lent themselves. But you will find that, while the organs of our opponents are filled with page after page of resolutions condemning the Government of Lord Salisbury as being parties to the attempted assassination of Mr. O'Brien, they have only a few lines in which to express their regret, if they do express their regret, at this brutal, unprovoked, and dastardly murder of a policeman in the execution of his duty. (Cheers.) I am asked to sympathise with Mr. O'Brien. No, ladies and gentlemen, I reserve all my sympathy for the victims of this base and odious conspiracy. I have no sympathy to waste on those to whose evil teachings it owes its existence. (Cheers.) I have tried to call your attention to the contrast between the two objects for your sympathy which are presented by the different parties. You have Mr. O'Brien, who goes without his clothes for twelve hours : and you have an inspector of police who has been murdered, and who leaves behind a widow and orphans, in consequence of the teachings of Mr. O'Brien and his colleagues. I do not doubt to which of these two your sympathies will be given.

#### THE TWO IRELANDS.

But, after all, these are comparatively minor questions. You are invited to concede the demand of three millions of Irishmen for Home Rule and self-government. That is the way it is presented to you. But the Gladstonian party forget to tell you that they are asking you at the same time, not only to relieve three millions of Irishmen from a rule to which they object, but to submit two millions to a rule which they have better reason for detesting. (Cheers.) You

are asked to submit two millions of Irishmen who are loyal, who are for the most part Protestant, who are of English and of Scottish origin—you are asked to submit them to the domination of a Parliament which would be controlled by the National League and by the authors of the Plan of Campaign. The majority of the people of Dundee have shown in more than one election that they sympathise with the three millions, and are against the two millions. (Cheers and hisses.) They are willing, apparently, not only to give independence to the three millions, but they are willing to submit the two millions to the majority, whose rule, as I have said, they have good reason for distrusting. The three millions hate the rule of Great Britain, hate the control of the Imperial Parliament, because it stands between them and the policy of confiscation they have openly avowed. The two millions detest and hate the government of the three millions just because they believe it will be a policy of confiscation—just because they believe that their lives and their fortunes and their liberty and their religion will not be safe under such rule. (Cheers.)

#### THE SCOTCH IN IRELAND.

I must say it has been to me the greatest of all unexplained mysteries in the course of this controversy that the Scottish nation, in so far, at all events, as the majority is concerned, should be inclined to sympathise on this occasion with the three millions, and turn away altogether from the two millions, to whom they are so closely allied by blood and by faith. (Cheers.) These two millions, as I have said, are largely of Scottish origin, and, gentlemen, they have shown themselves in the past worthy of their lineage. (Cheers.) They have passed through the fire of persecution, they have held their own against all kinds of assault, they have maintained themselves in Ireland as the fortress of the British connection. It was, I believe, thirteen Scotch lads, who were known as the apprentices of 'Derry, who closed the gates of 'Derry against the hosts that were sent under Tyrconnell, and who rolled back the wave which would have made Ireland a Popish and an alien province. (Cheers.) And it is these people, and their relatives and kinsfolk, who have established in Ireland ports and cities which rival those in Scotland and in England, and have won a subsistence for themselves and families from an ungrateful

soil. (Hear, hear.) They have been true to their ancient faith, they have been true to the countries which have sent them forth ; and now I ask you, What have these men done that their loyalty and their honesty are to be counted against them? Why are you to desert them in their time of need? I say that it would be the greatest blot on the fair fame and the traditions of Scotland that the surrender which is contemplated should take place with your goodwill and approval. You may throw them over, these brothers and relations and kinsfolk of your own. Then let me tell you though you desert them, they will hold their own. (Cheers.) I predict of them that they will never submit to the domination of an Irish Parliament, controlled by those who have preached the gospel of plunder, and by the advocates of anarchy. They will never submit to it without civil war, and then we will see whether you are prepared to carry out your policy logically and to the end, and whether you will send Scotch regiments and English regiments in order to put down Englishmen and Scotchmen who resist disloyalty and sedition. (Cheers.)

#### A QUESTION FOR HOME RULERS.

Now, gentlemen, I daresay you have listened often to Home Rulers speaking from this platform. When next you have a Home Ruler here ask him what he means by Home Rule. (Cheers.) Ask him especially if he means the right of self-government of any portion of the people ; and if so, why, when he grants self-government to three millions of Irishmen represented in Dublin, he should refuse self-government to two millions of people who may be represented at Belfast? (Cheers.) When he talks to you of Home Rule will he grant Home Rule to Ulster as well as Home Rule to the southern provinces of Ireland? This is a very important question. This is one of those questions which, again and again, with humility, we have put before Mr. Gladstone, and which Mr. Gladstone refuses to reply to, because he says it is a trap into which he cannot be expected to fall. He can give us no information. It would be sufficient for him to answer "Yes" or "No," when we say to him, "In your future Bill, in the Bill which is to replace the Bill which is dead—(laughter)—will you give to Ulster a separate representation, or will you attempt, against the will of Ulster, to put Ulster under the rule of the southern

provinces?" Mr. Gladstone refuses to tell us. Perhaps the next Home Ruler who comes here will be more communicative. (Laughter.) I beg of you to heckle him a little—(laughter)—and not to let him go till he has told you how he will deal with what I venture to say is the crux of this Irish question, because if he says to you that his intention is, whether Ulster likes it or not, to put Ulster under a Home Rule Parliament in Dublin, then you know that after such a policy has been carried through Parliament, if it ever is, you will have to face civil war in Ireland; and that unless you send your troops, and put down your own fellow-subjects and fellow-citizens, and those who are closest and nearest to you, they will make very short work of this majority—(cheers)—of which we hear so much. If you consider for a moment what these two millions have done, and what the three millions have failed to do, you may be perfectly certain that if they have a fair field and no favour it will be the Nationalist party that will first cry out for mercy. (Laughter and cheers.) But if, on the contrary, the Home Ruler, whom I have supposed to be occupying my place, tells you that he is willing to give Home Rule to all—that he admits the two millions have at least an equal right to consideration, and that if Ulster will not accept Home Rule in Dublin that he is perfectly prepared to give them Home Rule in Belfast—then I admit the whole question assumes a totally different aspect, and that we may consider it under altogether different circumstances. What we should then be asked to consider is not Home Rule as we have understood it, not the assertion of a national independence, which would lead to national separation, but a question of provincial government, a question which is well worthy of favourable consideration, above all by Scotchmen, who have got some claims to such a Government for themselves. (Cheers.)

#### HOME RULE FROM A SCOTCH STANDPOINT.

I want you, and I want Scotchmen generally, to abandon the perfectly disinterested attitude which they have taken up hitherto, and to look at this matter a little more closely from a Scotch standpoint. I want you all to see how any change will affect Scotch interests, and how far it will satisfy Scotch sentiment. I think we should find that if we could arrive at an agreement about the Scotch

part of the question, we might then be very well content to apply it to the settlement of the Irish Question. (Cheers.) I know there is already in Scotland an association which is called the Scottish Home Rule Association. (Laughter.) I am not quite clear exactly what it is that this association proposes, and I do not know how much authority and influence it has amongst you ; but in one point at all events I agree with the Scottish Home Rule Association—(hear, hear)—and that is—whatever in local government is good for Ireland will also be good for Scotland. (Cheers.) I would put it another way, and I will say that I am not prepared to give to Ireland one jot more than I am prepared to concede to Scotland. (Cheers.) I have always said that one of the fatal objections to Mr. Gladstone's Bill was that it could not be applied to Scotland. It would have been perfectly preposterous if it had been proposed for Scotland. I wonder if you have ever thought what the position of Scotland would have been if Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill had been applied to Scotland ; and remember this—that if it had been applied to Ireland successfully nothing could have prevented its being applied to Scotland. Scotland under these circumstances would have been treated, not as an independent nation, but as a tributary nation. (Hear, hear.) It would have been put in a worse position than any colony has ever been put in during the history of the world. Scotland would have had the entire control of what is called its local affairs ; but it would have been compelled to contribute a large share of the Imperial taxation without having the slightest voice in Imperial affairs. Scotland would have been cut off from all control in the management of the empire which Scotland has done as much as England to found. (Hear, hear.) Scotland would have had no part, no obligation, no responsibility in connection with the foreign policy of the empire of which it forms a part. Scotland would have occupied a degraded position.

#### GLADSTONIAN LEADERS ON HOME RULE FOR SCOTLAND.

But if that is the case with regard to the Bill which we are told is dead, I want to know whether we have any assurance that in any new Bill her position may be any better. I do not see very much in recent speeches which would justify us in taking a more favourable view of the

future than we have to take of the Bills of the past. I am going to trouble you with extracts from speeches recently made by leading Gladstonians upon the subject. Mr. John Morley, speaking at Edinburgh in 1886, said, "I totally, utterly, fundamentally, and incorrigibly"—(laughter)—there is a wealth of adjectives which characterises all Gladstonian oratory—(laughter)—"I totally, utterly, fundamentally, and incorrigibly deny that because I think a local legislature, with local executive responsibility, is the proper solution of the difficulty, therefore that must be the proper solution for the difficulties and shortcomings of which Scotland complains". Well, then there is Lord Rosebery at Dalkeith, (Cheers and hisses.) I cannot conceive anybody hissing Lord Rosebery's name. (Cheers.) He is a most representative Scotchman—(hear, hear)—and I have known him in times past as being a warm advocate of a great extension of local government in Scotland—(cheers)—but at Dalkeith he said, in reference to this connection between the Irish and the Scottish Question, "You cannot identify the Scotch demand with the Irish in its nature and character. The two cases are totally distinct." Well, gentlemen, why are they distinct? I wish these great authorities would have been a little more clear, and that they would have told us why it is that what they think to be so good in the way of local government for the Irish people is "totally, fundamentally, incorrigibly" unsuitable to the people of Scotland. I know perfectly well there is a distinction between the people of Scotland and the people of Ireland. (Hear, hear.) There are a good number of distinctions—(laughter)—but one distinction, and it would be a sufficient one, would be this :—If you had an Irish Parliament in Dublin, most certainly it would not rest until it had by some means or another secured its independence—(hear, hear)—most certainly it would not rest until it had carried out the policy of confiscation of private property to which its leaders are committed—most certainly it would not rest until it had carried out a policy to which also its leaders are committed, a policy of protective duties against British industries. (Hear, hear.) It is quite true that if you had a Scotch Parliament it would not commit any such vagaries as these—it would not make itself ridiculous in that way; but then, surely this is a reason why Scotland should have the preference. That is not any reason why Scotland should wait longer and expect less than Ireland, and

therefore I say that I desire to treat this question of local government from the Scottish standpoint. I desire to find out what is suitable for Scotland, and then I am willing to see whether by any possibility it will be safe to extend the same thing to Ireland.

#### THE CLAIMS OF SCOTLAND AND IRELAND COMPARED.

Now, Scottish claims are in all respects more reasonable, more easily argued, than the claims of Ireland. In the first place, the grievance is greater there is no doubt. It is perfectly true that Scotch business has been more or less neglected, more or less set aside, because of the pressure of legislative work, partially on account of the Irish obstruction in the House of Commons at Westminster. But no Irishman can complain that they have not had a sufficient share of the time and attention of Parliament. (Laughter and cheers.) Why, for the past twenty years the greater part of our time has been given to the consideration of Irish grievances, and in the course of that period we have removed the greater part—I think I might say the whole—of the grievances which were brought to our attention by the Irish patriots of the past, by the Irish leaders such as O'Connell, Butt, and men of that stamp. (Cheers.) Then again, if a claim is to be set up on the score of nationality, Scotland has a claim which cannot be contested. Scotland has a national history of the most interesting, the most important character. The history of Ireland is only the history of the petty squabbles of a number of hostile tribes, who were only pacified by the British settlement. They have no claim to be called a nation. They had not the characteristics and independent claims of a nation until at least very recent times, and after the British settlement, of which they complain. I say, on all these grounds Scotland has the first claim. (Hear, hear.) Now, then, what does Scotland want? What is it that would satisfy reasonable Scotchmen? What is it that would benefit Scotland and promote Scotch interests? I beg of you to treat this matter as reasonable men—to treat it with all deliberation. I think what Scotland by a large majority of its people should ask, it would be almost impossible for the Parliament of the United Kingdom to deny. We have not the



same ground for refusing the claim by Scotland that we might have for refusing the claim by Ireland. Therefore it behoves you to consider carefully before you ask what it is you ask—to be quite certain that what you demand as a boon might not prove to be a curse. (Hear, hear.) Ask what is good for you. Do not risk your real interests by asking too much, or try to secure a concession which may be a Pandora's gift, which may produce misery and not satisfy the demands which you are justified in putting forward. (Cheers.)

#### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

There are some things at all events upon which at the outset all should be agreed. I have never doubted for a moment that it would be desirable that the whole of the private bill legislation of the separate countries should be transacted in the separate countries. (Cheers.) I think it is scandalous that Scotchmen should have to carry all these purely local affairs to a tribunal at Westminster, when, as I believe, they might as well be decided on the spot. (Hear, hear.) But I am willing to go further than that. I used to be considered a rather advanced politician. (Laughter.) And I certainly have not given up any opinion upon this or any other subject of reform that I have ever expressed. I am prepared, as I say, to go further than that. I am prepared to believe that it is in the interests of Scotland, of Wales—and of Ireland also in due time—that not only local government should be conceded to them in the completest sense, not only that their municipal and county institutions should be completed and perfected, but that we might go beyond that, and that we might create representative authorities of wider scope and larger powers. (Cheers.) I doubt very much whether in Scotland it would be satisfactory to Scotchmen that those powers should be too much centralised. I am not by any means certain that the people of Glasgow would be satisfied to have their local affairs decided for them in Edinburgh. I am not certain that the people of the Highlands, again, who have many questions which are rather peculiar in their character, and which differentiate them from the rest of Scotland, would be satisfied to have their affairs decided upon in any of the southern towns; but I think it might be possible to create in Scotland, and, of course, also in other

parts of the kingdom, great provincial assemblies with all the powers of the French Councils General, and even larger powers ; and that having created these great representative assemblies, you might then entrust them with the power of initiating legislation, preparing it in the shape of provisional orders, which might be and would be passed at Westminster without discussion, unless they raised principles of a very contentious character. What would a scheme of that kind do for you? It would do this at all events—it would secure that your local interests should be consulted, it would secure that local sentiment should have full weight, that the peculiarity of the different countries, and even the different districts in our separate countries should be consulted and fully considered. It would secure that the arrears of legislation, of which you complain, should be at once overtaken. You might leave such questions as education, and temperance, and local government almost entirely to these local assemblies—(cheers)—and, above all, it would secure that these results should be achieved without impairing in the slightest degree the integrity of the United Kingdom—(cheers)—or the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. (Cheers.)

#### THE DAY OF SMALL NATIONALITIES IS PASSED.

That is what is called in our days a moderate scheme of reform, although perhaps three or four years ago it would have been considered revolutionary by some of those who are so loudly supporting still more extreme proposals. I suppose that it would not satisfy the Home Rule Association of Scotland. If I understand their object aright, they have a larger ambition than I have undertaken to satisfy. They desire to restore Scotland to the independent position among the nations which she occupied before the Union. I really have considerable sympathy with the patriotic aspirations which lead those gentlemen to put forward a programme of that kind ; but I warn them that it is impossible—(hear, hear)—I warn them that they cannot roll back the course of time—(cheers)—I warn them that the day of small nationalities has passed away. (Cheers.) They may perhaps be supported by a sufficient number of their fellow-countrymen, they may break up these united kingdoms of ours into fragments, they may reduce England to the position of a third or fifth rate Power, to the

position of Holland or Belgium or Greece ; but they cannot raise Scotland to the position of a great and important nation also. (Cheers.) You have seen oftentimes, I dare say, a partnership between firms in business, who have been forced to come together by the pressure of competition, and in which each of the partners has brought to the common stock his capital, his skill in manufacturing, and in the regulation of his business ; and then, as a result of the combination, the transactions of the new firm are enlarged beyond their most sanguine expectations. If they cover the globe, if their reputation transcends anything which resulted from the transactions of the separate partners, would not you think that any of these were very unreasonable who complained that their reputation had suffered, that their individuality had been absorbed in the greater organisation which their joint efforts had established ? (Cheers.) So it is, I say, with the partnership which has made Great Britain. (Cheers.) The partners in that firm—yes, both of them—may be proud of their past history and of their traditions when they were rivals, and when they were foemen worthy of each other's steel. But now they have still greater reason to be proud of the achievements they have accomplished in common—now that for so long they have been side by side, and shoulder to shoulder. Under one name and under one Government they have created a world-wide empire, and have carried civilisation to all the four corners of the earth. (Loud cheers.) I say to you, gentlemen, that the fame and the name of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland is the inheritance of every Scotchman, of every Englishman, and of every patriotic Irishman. Let it be our glory, as it is our duty, to hand it down untarnished and undiminished to succeeding generations. (Cheers.)

*BACUP. May 28, 1889.*

## COMING TO CLOSE QUARTERS.

[During the general election of 1886, Mr. Chamberlain visited Rossendale at the invitation of Lord Hartington's Committee, and addressed two meetings in support of his Lordship's candidature. Lord Hartington was returned with a majority of nearly 1500. In May, 1889, Mr. Chamberlain again visited Rossendale and spoke at Bacup.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, who was loudly cheered, said :—You have been told that this is my first visit to Bacup, but you know that it is not my first visit to your constituency. (Hear, hear.) I came here in the very thick of the fight in 1886, and I had then the honour and the pleasure of supporting Lord Hartington's candidature, and of taking some part in the general election which ended in a great majority for the Unionist cause, and to which you contributed in no mean manner by once more re-electing with a triumphant majority your present member. (Cheers.) I am glad to know that there are some of our Gladstonian friends who are present here to-night. I will ask them whether—if we are to put all party considerations aside for a moment—they do not agree with me that there is no constituency in the kingdom which might not feel itself honoured by returning to the House of Commons a man who occupies such a distinguished place in the history of this country and who enjoys in such large measure the confidence and the respect of his fellow citizens as Lord Hartington. (Cheers.) Your member does not owe much of his present position to the accidental advantages of birth with which he is sometimes taunted. I am not quite certain whether now-a-days it is any advantage at all for a public man—(laughter)—to be the son of a duke, or even to have the honour of acquaintance with a duke. (Renewed laughter.) Dukes are rather at a discount just now—(laughter)—and it is not to his birth or his wealth or rank that Lord Hartington owes the honour in which he is held. It is his ability—

(cheers)—it is his courage—(cheers)—it is his English virtue of straightforward honesty which have secured for him the confidence of a constituency like this, which consists, as I am glad to know, in the largest proportion of working men. (Hear, hear.) Now, I was here, as I say, in 1886. That is three years ago, and I have been asking myself whether anything has happened since to change the opinion which you formed then, or to make you regret the decision at which you then arrived. (A voice: "Yes".) Yes! Well, one thing is perfectly certain, your member has not changed—(cheers)—and if you have changed it is for you to justify this alteration in your opinions. It is for you to show why you have turned your coats: it is for you to give good grounds for the faith which is in you. (Hear, hear.) And if there are any here who supported Lord Hartington at the last election and who have now deserted him, they had an opportunity a few days ago to explain their action.

#### GLADSTONIANS IN COUNCIL.

I think you, Mr. Chairman, have referred to a meeting held in this very town of Bacup about a fortnight ago. My friend Mr. Brooks has been kind enough to send me a report of that meeting, and I can assure you that I have perused it with the greatest possible interest. (Laughter.) I saw at once that it was a most remarkable occasion. (Hear, hear.) I learned from the opening words of the chairman that the meeting was called to hear the two greatest men in England—(laughter)—so far as speech-making was concerned, and that they were Sir Wilfrid Lawson—(laughter)—and an Irish member of the name of Power. Sir Wilfred Lawson and Mr. Power appeared to sit silent under this encomium—modestly silent; and they were also silent when the chairman proceeded to tell them that the Gladstonians were the *élite* of the Liberal party, and that they were men all of whom thought and acted for themselves. I say that that was a rare opportunity. Here was a conjunction which is not often witnessed, and from which not only Bacup, but the whole country, had a right to expect great things. Here were the greatest men in England—(laughter)—who had succeeded for I know not how long in concealing their greatness—(laughter)—and here were the thinking Liberals who had succeeded in concealing their thoughts. (Laughter.)

Now what did they do? In the first place, they unanimously passed the following resolution: "That this meeting emphatically protests against the coercive policy which Her Majesty's Government is pursuing towards Ireland". In a speech which must of necessity be limited by time it is quite impossible to deal with all the various branches of the Irish Question, and I do not propose at this moment or on this occasion to deal with the question of coercion. I have dealt with it on many previous occasions. I have pointed out that what is called coercion in Ireland is merely the strict administration of the ordinary law. I have pointed out that no honest man has any reason to fear coercion in Ireland. Nobody has suffered from coercion in Ireland but the men who have gloried in breaking the law which is at the present time in the United Kingdom the will of the people, and, as the will of the people is sacred and must be obeyed. (Cheers, and a voice: "We want a chance of changing it".) I beg your pardon, I did not hear you. (Another voice: "He wants a general election, that's what he means".) I understand our constitutional system to be that the majority of the people entrust their powers to the Parliament for seven years—(cheers)—and I expect that this Parliament will fulfil the trust which has been given to it. (Cheers.) But in two or three years at the outside, there must be, and will be, a general election—(hear, hear)—and I prophesy now it will come all too soon for the gentleman who interrupted me. (Laughter and cheers.) Do you think that we fear a general election? (Cheers, and a voice: "Yes".) You are very much mistaken. (Laughter and cheers.) I do not see, however, why the servants of the people, who have every right to assume that they still possess the confidence of their employers, should be giving notice every other year. (Laughter and cheers.)

#### FOLLOWING BLINDFOLD.

But I want to go on with this resolution. The part of it to which I particularly desire to call your attention is the second part: "That this meeting desires to express its unabated confidence in the Home Rule proposals of Mr. Gladstone, believing such to be the only solution of the Irish problem". (Cheers.) Now, the first remark that I have to make upon that part of the resolution is this. We have been told that Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule proposals are dead. Well, it

is perfectly clear that the *élite* of the Liberal party in Bacup did not accept that view at all, because I do not suppose that men who think for themselves would be so absurd as to propose a resolution of unabated confidence in a corpse. (Laughter.) The second remark I want to make is this. I have read every word of the report of the meeting, and I tell you that, from first to last, not one of these great men—not one of the *élite* of the Liberal party that assembled in Bacup a fortnight ago—said one single word in explanation of these proposals of Mr. Gladstone, in defence of them, or in reply to any one of the objections that we have taken to them. No ; they were all silent upon the point. There were the usual jokes from Sir Wilfrid Lawson, the funny man of the House of Commons. (Laughter.) There were the usual platitudes from the Irish Member, who uses them to cajole an English audience, and which contrast very much with the utterances of the same member when he speaks in Ireland or in America ; there was some abuse of the Government ; there was a great deal of abuse of the Liberal Unionists ; but there was not one word of argument—not one word directed to your intelligence. It was abuse, misrepresentation, humour of a kind, but not one word of serious argument. (Hear, hear.) I confess that all this is a rather unsatisfactory state of things. I should not trouble you with any allusion to a meeting of this kind if I did not feel that it was characteristic. (Laughter.) I do not know whether you have had the patience to read the accounts of other Gladstonian meetings, where men even greater than the greatest men have attended—(laughter)—and where speeches have been delivered upon the Irish Question. If you have done so, you will, I am sure, agree with me that our opponents have abandoned altogether every effort to prove their case, every effort to support the proposals to which they are committed, I was reading the other day an account of a man who was brought up before the Metropolitan police magistrate at Bow Street, and he was accused of pestering the Queen with the account of a wonderful invention which, by pressing your thumb upon a small air-pump, would answer any question upon any subject under the sun, and would think for any number of people better even than any of them could think for themselves. (Laughter.) That poor man, that intended benefactor of the human race, was committed to an asylum ; but a think his machine must have fallen into the hands of Mr. Schnadhorst,

and he must be using it for the benefit of the Gladstonian party. (Laughter and cheers.) Instead of thinking for themselves, they have given up the right of private judgment altogether. They have placed their entire faith in one great man. (A voice: "He is a great man".) Yes, he is a great man if you like, but there is no man so great that the little men ought to follow him blindfold. (Cheers.) At the present time the Gladstonian party, whether in Bacup or elsewhere, cannot discuss the Irish Question—I defy them; they do not know what it is—until their great man speaks. (Hear, hear.) And their great man is silent; or, when he speaks, he speaks in a language which they cannot understand. (Laughter and cheers.) After all I think this is a serious state of things, and I do not rejoice in the position to which the majority of the Liberal party has been reduced. There was a time when Liberals believed in measures and not in men. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) There was a time when they claimed to know the reason of their faith, and I deplore the condition to which in recent time so many of them have been reduced.

#### THE POINT AT ISSUE.

Let us see if we cannot set them a better example: let us see if we cannot argue out the question seriously—(hear, hear)—let us see if we cannot clearly put the issue which divides the Unionist party from the Gladstonians; let us come to close quarters. (Hear, hear.) I want to put aside those vague phrases by which the people are deceived. If we are to fight—I regret the necessity—but if we are to fight, for heaven's sake let us know what we are fighting about. (Cheers.) I suppose if I were to ask a Gladstonian what it is that he wants to do for Ireland—(a voice: "Ask a Tory"). Well I should not object. I know this, if I asked a Tory I should get an answer—(loud cheers)—and if I asked a Gladstonian, and he were honest, he would tell me he did not know. (Laughter and cheers.) But I suppose that he might say that he wanted to give to Ireland the management of her distinctively domestic affairs. Now, is that an unfair representation? ("No.") What the Gladstonians want to do is to give to the Irish party the management of their distinctively domestic affairs. But that is no issue. That is no sufficient answer. (Hear, hear.) If I asked a Tory, as I was requested to do just now,



he very likely might say the very same thing. I do not know at the present moment any party, I do not know any statesman of the slightest importance who is not perfectly willing to give an extension of local government to Ireland, and to give to Ireland and the Irish party much greater control than they have at present over their own distinctively domestic affairs. A Tory would say so, because the Government, only within the last few days, through the mouth of Mr. Goschen, have declared their intention and desire to deal with this subject of the extension of local government at no distant date. Lord Hartington, your member, has referred to the same subject again and again in recent speeches, and has always referred to it favourably. And as for myself, I have gone further than either. I have put before the people, I have put before the Unionists, a complete scheme. (A voice: "Which scheme?") Well, you can buy it for a shilling, and if you cannot afford a shilling I will send it you for nothing. (Laughter and cheers.) I have put before the country, and I have printed a complete and elaborate scheme of local government for Ireland, which I believe would satisfy every reasonable and every patriotic Irishman, and which, at the same time, would maintain the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament and the integrity of the empire. (Cheers.) I only say this to point out to you that under the circumstances we are all agreed. We are all willing to grant the right of Ireland to manage her distinctively domestic affairs, and if you are to find the point of difference you must go beyond that. The question is not whether local government shall be conceded to Ireland, but what local government—(hear, hear)—what form of local government this management of domestic affairs shall take.

#### FOUR KINDS OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Will you bear with me? I am afraid of wearying you, but I want you to understand, and I want the Gladstonian party to understand, what is the difference which is keeping us apart. There are at least four distinct forms of local government, and from these you may take your choice. The question is which of them you will give to Ireland. Let us see what they are. In the first place, there is municipal self-government: that means the local administration which is placed in the hands of the Corporations of great towns, and which has recently

been extended by the Unionist Government to all the counties, in the shape of county councils, and which is now being extended to Scotland. This is municipal self-government. Well, the Irish Nationalists, the Parnellite party, speak very scornfully of municipal government. (A voice : "And right, too.") I should like very much to discuss that question. (Laughter.) "Very right, too," says a gentleman at the bottom of the hall. Now let us see. I think I know more of local government than most people—(hear, hear)—because I have devoted a great part of my life to it ; I have taken an active part in it. I have always maintained its dignity and its usefulness and its importance, and I say that local government is nearer to you whom I am addressing, is nearer to the vast majority of the people of this country, it is nearer to the working classes, it is more important to their happiness and their welfare than Imperial administration. (Cheers.) It is very well to laugh at a policy of sewage, but a policy of sewage touches you more nearly than a policy of constitutional change. What does it matter to a working man whether the vote is extended, whether the Church is disestablished, while his children are lying ill from typhoid fever, while his children are passing uneducated through the world without a chance of advancing their material prosperity? (Hear, hear.) Local government, rightly administered, has more capacity of usefulness for the people of this country than the administration which is concerned with the foreign policy of the United Kingdom, which deals with the position of the Portuguese in Nyassa, or with the local squabbles of chiefs in some distant portions in her Majesty's dominions. (Cheers.) That is municipal self-government ; and, for myself, I say I attach to it the highest importance. But you may go beyond that, and in the second place, there is provincial self-government. That is the same kind of self-government as is enjoyed, perhaps to a larger extent, by the States of the great Republic of America. Now, these are two forms of self-government—municipal self-government and provincial self-government. All I ask you to notice in passing is that they do not touch the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. In the third place, there is colonial self-government. That is the government which we have granted to our great colonies of Canada, to Australasia, and to the Cape in South Africa. Now, there is one thing to be said about that. It is only separated by a very thin line, indeed, from absolute indepen-

dence. The colonies are still bound to us by a central tie; but you know perfectly well that if we went to war to-morrow, if it were a question of the life and death of the United Kingdom, these colonies are not bound to find a single man, to find one single penny for our defence. They have no responsibility, no obligation for our foreign policy, or for our national position. They have the right to make their own tariffs, and they do make them very much sometimes against the interests of this country; and if to-morrow any one of these colonies were to demand, by the unanimous, or by the practically unanimous opinion of the population, entire separation from Great Britain, do you think we should go to war with them about it, or try to prevent them by force? Do you think there is a single man in the United Kingdom who would not say in that condition of things, "Much as we regret and deplore the decision at which you have arrived, we admit it is you who have the right to judge, and if you think it well to sever your connection with the great mother country from which you have sprung, to separate yourselves from all the traditions of which you ought to be so proud, it is not for us to hinder you". I say then that colonial self-government, although it is not separation, it is very near to separation. Lastly, the only other form of self-government which can be accorded to any people is the self-government which we admit in the case of every independent State and nation.

#### WHICH DOES IRELAND WANT?

Now, then, I should like some of those gentlemen below who have listened to me with great attention—and I thank them for it—to tell me which of these forms of self-government do they mean to confer on Ireland. I am waiting for an answer. (A voice: "And you will wait all night if you depend on them to give it". (Cheers and laughter.) Well, I will answer the question for them, and I do not think you will complain of me. When we have answered the question we shall know what is the issue, and what separates us from our former friends and colleagues; and I will ask this meeting to say which is right. Here is one way of finding out which of these four things it is which it is intended to confer upon Ireland. Let us see what the Irish members say about it. There is no doubt about the importance of their opinion under the present circumstances. Mr.

Gladstone has declared that no scheme, no plan is entitled to a hearing or consideration which has not the approval and support, he does not say of the Irish people, but of the majority of the Irish representatives—that is to say, of the eighty-six gentlemen who at the present time are returned to Parliament by the votes of very little more than half the electors of Ireland. Never mind how they are returned, there they are, and it is to them that Mr. Gladstone appeals. If we want to know whether any scheme will be satisfactory, we have been told in plain language that we must go to them, and we must enquire whether it satisfies their aspirations before Mr. Gladstone will look at it. I say that under these circumstances it becomes of the utmost importance to know what is the opinion of these eighty-six Irish members. I am going to trouble you with some extracts from their speeches. I hope you won't think I am wearying you unnecessarily, but you will bear in mind that if I were to rely upon one extract from one speaker probably he would deny it; and if he did not deny it he would say that it ought not to be taken by itself, and that it was unfair to take a single extract from a number of speeches, and that generally it did not represent his whole view. Therefore, I think it necessary to call your attention to a number of extracts. I think you will see that there is one consistent line running through the whole of them, and when I have read those extracts you will be as well able as I am to answer the question as to what will satisfy, I do not say the Irish people, but the eighty-six Irish members to whom Mr. Gladstone refers us.

#### MR. PARNELL'S CLAIM.

In the first place, here is Mr. Parnell. Mr. Parnell made a celebrated speech at Cincinnati, on February 23, 1880. He said:—“None of us, whether we be in America or in Ireland, will be satisfied until we have destroyed the last link which keeps Ireland bound to England”. At Clonmel, on January 9, 1885, he said:—“We claim for Ireland a restitution of her Parliament, her independent Parliament, of which she was cheated, and deprived towards the close of the last century”. Remember, Mr. Gladstone has told us again and again, even in a letter which was published from him only a few days ago, that the supremacy of the Imperial Government must be main-

tained. Mr. Parnell says :—" We claim for Ireland her independent Parliament". At Wicklow, on October 5, 1885, Mr. Parnell said :—" We should insist upon a Parliament that should have power to protect Irish manufactures, if it be the will of the Parliament of the Irish people that they should be protected". At Cork, he said :—" No man had a right to fix the bounds to the march of a nation, and while they struggled to-day for that, they might struggle for it with the proud consciousness that they were doing nothing to hinder and prevent better men in the future gaining better things". Do you see the importance of that statement? Mr. Parnell says, in effect, that " we may have to accept something less than our demand, but remember this—we have not pledged our nation, and better men than we to come after us will be able to ask for more". What we want, he says, is an independent Parliament; a Parliament that can, if it likes, protect the manufactures of Ireland; a Parliament which shall not own the supremacy and control of any other Parliament on the face of the globe. That is what we want. We will take what we can get, and we will leave it to our successors to get the rest. Now, you will see that, throughout these speeches, there is the same idea. It is that Ireland is to be treated as a separate nation. It may be said, perhaps, "Oh, these are old speeches". That nonsense will not do. I will go to the very latest speech delivered. Mr. Parnell was speaking only two or three days ago to the corporation in the south of Ireland who came to congratulate him on the exposure of the Pigott forgeries.

#### THE PARNELL COMMISSION.

I have not, since the appointment of the Parnell Commission, said one word on that subject. But I should like, if you will allow me, to make one or two remarks on the present position. When the Commission was proposed in the House of Commons, I stated publicly in my place that I did not believe that Mr. Parnell had written those letters, and from what I knew of him, I did not think he could be guilty of writing them. Under these circumstances, I need not say that I am glad that he has been able to show to all the world that the charge was false—(cheers)—and I think he is entitled to the sympathy of every honest man in the trouble, the annoyance, and the suffering to which those charges have submitted him. I do not myself feel inclined to

blame him much, because now he retorts upon his accusers, and is almost as unjust to them as they were formerly to him. But, although I never believed that Mr. Parnell wrote those letters, I did believe, and I do believe, that the agitation of which Mr. Parnell was the head, went perilously near to the line which divides political agitation from violence, illegality, and crime. (Cheers.) Whether it overpassed that line is a question which the Commission has to decide. (Hear, hear.) Until it has reported, I should think it indecent to say a word, and I think that it is a little premature and a little unwise of the friends of Mr. Parnell to indulge in their exultation until the whole of the charges have been disposed of. I wanted to refer to this speech of Mr. Parnell's, not in connection with the Commission, but in connection with the subject of which I am treating. The speech was one, apparently, of a man who was suffering under considerable depression. It did not strike me, at all events, that it was the speech of a man who believed that he was likely to succeed. He was preparing for defeat, but, at the same time, in the peroration he alluded to the hopes with which he entered upon this struggle, and expressed his conviction that ultimately they would be realised, and that "Ireland would be assisted along the path to nationhood". There, again, you see exactly the same idea. I should claim for Mr. Parnell perfect consistency in his utterances from first to last. He has declared that Ireland is a separate nation, and he has claimed that any self-government, which you should ultimately concede to her, should be based upon the principle of her nationality.

#### OPINIONS OF MR. PARNELL'S COLLEAGUES.

Let us go on to see what his colleagues have said. Mr. Healy said :—"We wish to see Ireland what God intended she should be—a powerful nation"—not a part of a nation, but a powerful nation. Mr. O'Brien, at Wexford, said :—"When our programme is accomplished, landlordism will vanish from the country; the soil will be free, and its people will own no master but the Almighty, and no flag but the green flag of an independent Irish nation". Then Mr. John Redmond, speaking at the Chicago Convention on August 16, 1886, said :—"What is the one great principle underlying this movement? It is the unqualified recognition of the distinct

nationality of Ireland." Mr. Sheehy, on June 5, 1887, said :—"We will go on until we arrive at the great goal of national independence". Mr. Sullivan, on June 1, 1884, said :—"It is said that, as soon as the National party gets eighty or ninety Parnellites into Parliament, the next thing will be the repeal of the Union. To those who make that objection I reply—'Right you are, old boy'." (Laughter.) Michael Davitt, I think, is connected with this district, and I will say what I have before said, both in public and in private, that he seems to me to be one of the purest figures in this great agitation ; and, as far as I have been able to judge his course, it has been an honest one ; and, although I think he is mistaken, I have a respect for his character. Mr. Davitt said :—"I would like to see Ireland as free as I would wish to see any other nation—free to manage her own affairs in her own way, and without any interference whatever by any other people for any purpose". I will only trouble you with one more quotation. These quotations are all from Irish members and leaders of the Irish agitation ; but it is worth while to know what is said by leaders of the Irish agitation in America, because it is they who find the funds, and it is they who ultimately determine the policy. Now, at the Chicago Convention, which was attended by delegates from all parts of the United States, by Irish delegates, and also by several Irish members of the Imperial Parliament, the following resolution was passed unanimously :—"That any measure of self-government proposed by the British Parliament, which refuses to recognise the independence from foreign control and dictation of the proposed Irish legislature, will be inadequate for the relief of Ireland, and ought to be rejected by the leaders of the Irish people".

#### THE RECOGNITION OF IRISH NATIONALITY.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I have finished the extracts with which I have thought it necessary to trouble you, but, at least, I think, I have established this—that, in the opinion of the Irish members and of the Irish National party, local government for Ireland must be based upon the principle of nationality. I say that if those are the principles upon which we are called upon to decide, there is an issue upon which I for one am prepared to take my stand. I say that the self-government which is claimed for Ireland, which is

to be independent of foreign control, which is to be based upon a separate nationality, if that is the principle which is accepted by the Gladstonian party, which is adopted by the *élite* of the Liberals of Bacup, then I say we differ from them, and we shall continue to differ from them to the end of the chapter, and we shall repudiate and resist their conclusions as long as we have any influence or any power to exert upon the matter. (Cheers.) We are willing to accept self-government upon municipal lines. There are many of us who are also willing to accept, and I believe all of us would be ready carefully to discuss and consider, self-government, which could be based upon provincial lines ; but we will not recognise that Ireland, which has never had, historically or politically, any claim to be considered a separate nation, and which is now an integral part of the much greater nation which we call the United Kingdom—we will not allow that the form of its government should be determined by the claim which it sets up to a separate nationality. (Cheers.) And then, forsooth, we are called Tories and Reactionists, because we take up that position. At all events, we have a good precedent behind us. We have the precedent of the most democratic nation on the face of the globe. What did the Americans do? The Americans had been willing, and always were willing, to allow to their people, in the fullest and most generous measure, State government, which is the rule throughout the great Republic ; but when some of those States, not satisfied with that, put forward a claim to be considered a separate nationality, the great democracy of America poured forth its blood and its treasure like water, and stamped out for ever that insolent and presumptuous claim. (Cheers.)

#### THE RIGHTS OF A NATION.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, just let me press home this matter to you a little more. Why do we object to consider the claim of Ireland to be a separate nationality? Because if you grant that Ireland is a nation, you must go a good deal further. If Ireland is a nation, are you going to refuse to Ireland all the essential qualities and privileges of a nation? How can you do it? How can you logically refuse to Ireland, for instance, her own flag, which Mr. O'Brien demands for her? How can you refuse to her the right to make her



own arrangements with foreign nations, to arrange her own diplomacy? How can you refuse to a separate nation the right to defend herself with her own army and her own navy? How can you refuse to her the right to make whatever tariff she pleases, whether that hurts your industries or whether it does not? How can you refuse to her the right to have her own Established Church, even though it be a Roman Catholic Church? If she be a separate nation, she has as much right to have her own Church as France, or Italy, or Spain, or Germany, or Austria. How can you refuse to her the right to collect her own revenue in her own way, to raise her own taxes by her own means? Mr. Gladstone proposed to deprive her of every one of these rights in the Bill, the preposterous Bill, which was defeated—(laughter)—a Bill which, if it had been brought into the House of Commons not by your great man, but by a little man, would have been laughed out of that assembly in half an hour. He proposes to call Ireland a nation, and to deprive her at the same time of all the rights which nations enjoy. Yes, he proposed it; but his paper restrictions and his paper constitution would have been torn to pieces in six months by the parliament which he was going to set up, and then you would have had but two alternatives before you. You might either have reconquered Ireland, you might have sent an army—having given up your position of vantage, having given up all your strong places, having betrayed all your loyal fellow-citizens, you might then have attempted to reconquer the country—or you might have done what a people so cowardly as to abandon their rights and to betray their trust would probably have done—you might have cut Ireland adrift, and separated her in all points from the United Kingdom. I say that such a project as this might perhaps be defended as not being separation, but it was a project which would have led to separation. If you defend that project, if you express your unabated confidence in it, you will have to swallow separation, you will have to defend separation; and do not be indignant any longer when we say that you are not Liberals, you are Separatists. (Cheers.)

#### THE QUESTION OF ULSTER.

But there is another difficulty in any such arrangement as has been suggested to which I would just briefly allude. What are you

going to do with Ulster in case you recognise the nationality of Ireland? If you admit the right of the Irish people, who, I say, constitute a portion of the United Kingdom, to separate themselves from the United Kingdom, how would you deny to Ulster her right to separate herself from Ireland? You are going upon the hypothesis of self-government for Ireland; why should you not give self-government to Ulster? This you may take for granted—your loyal fellow-subjects in Ulster will never submit to be governed by a Dublin parliament. (Cheers.) And then you will find yourself in this position—either you must compel Ulster by force of arms to submit to a Dublin parliament, and I do not believe that Great Britain has sunk so low as to allow the forces of the Crown to be used for such a purpose; or else you must come to the local government upon provincial lines, to which I have already called your attention. (Cheers.) You will find that there is no compromise possible except upon those provincial lines.

I hope that I have made clear, as I have endeavoured to do, the issue which still divides us. If you will recognise Ireland as a nation, all I can say is we are not with you. We oppose you to the full extent of our powers. If, however, you are prepared to abandon that idea, if you cling to the notion of a united kingdom, of which Ireland is only a province or a portion, and if you want to extend further measures of self-government to this portion or province, then I say we are with you. We are ready to consider the terms of any proposals which may be made with such an object. (Cheers.)

#### THE POLITICAL CHAMELEON.

I saw the other day that there was a great meeting at Manchester, and a great man attended it. Sir William Harcourt—(laughter)—addressed a meeting in the Free Trade Hall, and Sir William Harcourt complained that there was a want of principle on the part of the Unionist Party. Who made Sir William Harcourt a judge of principle? (Laughter.) Then he went on to attack me. He attacked me, because, he said, of my inconsistency. And he said that, at the time of the Round-table Conference, I was willing to accept a Dublin parliament, with an executive dependent upon it. Sir William Harcourt knows perfectly well that he is playing with

words. I think he is very ill-advised to refer to the Round-table Conference. I challenged him in his place in the House of Commons to deny that what we discussed at the Round-table Conference was a scheme based upon provincial lines, based upon the lines of the provincial government of Canada, and not Mr. Gladstone's scheme. It had no resemblance whatever to it. It was a scheme which was not based upon the nationality of Ireland, and it is identical or substantially identical with that scheme to which I have already referred, which I have published, and of which I have promised to send a copy to my enquiring friend at the bottom of the hall. (Laughter and cheers.) But Sir William Harcourt, at the Round-table Conference in 1887, was in substantial agreement with me. He was in favour of a scheme upon provincial lines. Now he deems it preposterous, and he says that the nationality of Ireland must be recognised. And then, forsooth, he accuses me of inconsistency. (Laughter.) What is the true colour of this political chameleon—(laughter)—who is all things by turns, and nothing long? (Renewed laughter.) Down to 1885, he was the loudest-voiced of all the advocates of the most stringent coercion which has ever been introduced into the House of Commons. At that time he denounced the Parnellites as steeped in crime, and he was willing that the Tories should stew in Parnellite juice. (Laughter.) A few months later, he was himself bathing in that delectable mixture. (Loud laughter.) He was declaring that there should be no strengthening of the ordinary law, and that Mr. Parnell's demands should be wholly conceded. In 1887, he saw his opportunity, and he went on a different tack. He was then in substantial agreement with me. He was seeking for a compromise upon provincial lines. Now he considers these proposals ridiculous and unworthy of credence. He reminds me of an earlier politician of whom the satirist of his day has written :—

Still violent whatever cause he undertook,  
But most against the party he forsook.

(Laughter and cheers.) Still, gentlemen, we will be considerate with Sir William Harcourt. (Laughter.) I have hopes of him yet. (Loud laughter.) It is a long time since he last changed; I think it is time for him to turn again. (Laughter.)

### THE ONLY COMPROMISE POSSIBLE.

But, meanwhile, I refer to his speech because, while I think it would be fatal to recognise this principle of the nationality of Ireland, I believe that it is wise and desirable, and just and right, to allow the utmost local liberty ; and if you agree with me in this, then you will see that the only compromise possible, the only solution of the vexed question, must be found, I do not say in the plan which I have submitted, but on the lines to which I attach importance. The plan is nothing, the details are nothing, the question of the principle is everything. If you accept the idea of an extension of municipal or provincial government, I believe that the union of the Liberal party, the union of all sensible and reasonable men of all parties, is possible. Without that, I say, the fight must go on, and I have very little doubt of the ultimate result. I do not suppose that the time has come yet for any such compromise as that I have suggested. No, they must be allowed to stew a little longer. (Laughter.) They must be allowed to wait for the general election, from which some gentlemen expect so much, but which I am convinced will show them the hollowness of the hopes which they have been basing upon a few bye-elections here and there throughout the country. They will find that the country has not changed its mind upon the question of principle, and when they have discovered once and for all that the country is not with them, that they cannot force this thing down our throats by purely party tactics, then I say there is a possibility that we may once more come together, and that we may all be able to treat this question outside party lines, above party lines, and in the interests of the whole nation.

### MR. GLADSTONE AND BRITISH REFORMS.

There is one compensation which I find for all the evils which Mr. Gladstone has inflicted upon the country by the policy of his later years. This is in the proof that the Unionist party have given, that men in England are still to be found who rise above party interests—(hear, hear)—who are willing to put them aside in defence of the greater and more important national interests which are at

stake. (Cheers.) I do not conceal from you that this involves sacrifices from both sections of the Unionist party, but I say that those sacrifices will be, as they have been, loyally and cheerfully borne, and that the nation will be the gainer. Look at the legislation of the last few years. The Acts which the Unionist Government have been enabled, in spite of obstruction, to put upon the statute-book, will compare favourably in their influence upon the happiness and the welfare of the masses of the people with any legislation during any similar period in our recent history—(cheers)—and, for my part, I look forward to further progress in this direction. These Acts are the direct result of the Unionist alliance. They are due to the Unionist Government, and if Mr. Gladstone came back to power—I want the Gladstonians to reflect upon this—all this progress, this hope of progress, would be indefinitely stayed. I know there are some Liberals who are so shortsighted as to imagine that all their special fancies would be advanced by the return to power of Mr. Gladstone. There are Welshmen who fancy they are going to get from him who has been in the past their greatest, their most eloquent, their most powerful, opponent, who even the other day could not be brought to vote for Mr. Dillwyn's motion—that they are going to get from him the disestablishment of the Welsh Church. There are educationists who expect to receive at his hands free education for the people of this country. There are temperance people who imagine that he will lend his great name to secure the local veto. When I was up in Scotland I found the poor crofters, than whom there is no class more deserving of the sympathy of their fellow-countrymen, had been waiting for years in the hope that Mr. Gladstone would lift his hand on their behalf. I ask you honestly to tell me for which of these causes—for which one of them—has Mr. Gladstone ever lifted a little finger, or said a word, during the time he was in power, and when he had the opportunity of promoting them. (Cheers.) And, believe me, if he came back again—he has not deceived you; he has not left you in any doubt—these questions would once more be relegated to a back seat. (Cheers.) Ireland would once more block the way, and we should have session after session occupied in barren efforts to carry Home Rule Bills, and perhaps in an effort to carry from time to time coercion Bills for Ulster.

## THE UNIONIST PARTY AND REFORM.

I say, in the interests of Liberal progress, support the Unionist party—(cheers)—in spite of Sir William Harcourt. I can point to my record, which I think is better than his—(laughter)—and I say I am still a Liberal and a Radical. (Cheers.) I was a Liberal and a Radical when Sir William Harcourt was thinking of joining the Tory Government under Mr. Disraeli. (Cheers.) I was still a Liberal and a Radical when Sir William Harcourt was boasting on every platform in the country that he was the true successor of the Whigs—(laughter)—and I shall remain a Liberal and a Radical through all the changes through which Sir William Harcourt has yet to pass. (Laughter and cheers.) But though I be a Liberal, and though I be a Radical, I like half a loaf better than no bread. (Cheers.) If I cannot get disestablishment I am very thankful to have local government, and to see all my fellow citizens admitted to a part and share in local administration. If I cannot get the universal management of education by freely elected School Boards, not the less on that account do I desire to have free education, and not the less willing am I to accept it even from the hands of a Conservative Government. (Cheers.) If I think that the local veto is somewhat extreme, none the less am I prepared to work for Sunday closing. And if I do not think that all ills to which the crofters and the agricultural population everywhere are subject can be removed by a stroke of the pen, none the less on that account am I glad to recognise the sympathy which this Government has shown for the poor, and none the less am I willing to assert my belief that they will yet do something, if they should continue to enjoy your confidence and support, to root the agricultural labourer on the soil he tills, and to relieve the crofter population of the west of Scotland from at least the greatest grievances under which they labour. These things are only feasible and possible so long as the Unionist alliance continues; and I am not going to throw them away although Mr. Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt, and Mr. John Morley, who have never done anything to assist these proposals, call me a Tory because I will not assist them in their conspiracy to break up the United Kingdom. (Loud cheers.)

*LIBERAL UNION CLUB. July 31, 1889.*

THE PARTY OF DISINTEGRATION.

[The Liberal Union Club held its last dinner during the Session of 1889, at Greenwich on July 31st. Mr. Chamberlain presided, and after the usual loyal toasts, proposed, "The Unionist Cause".]

I HAVE the pleasure of proposing to you as a toast, "The Unionist Cause". (Cheers.) This is a whitebait dinner, and a whitebait dinner held by any of the numerous sections into which the House of Commons is now divided brings us within measurable distance of the end of the session. Gentlemen, I am inclined to congratulate you upon the termination—the approximate termination—of the labours of the Legislature. I have been now thirteen years in the House of Commons, and in my experience this has been the dullest, but I hope not the least useful or the least productive session with which I have become acquainted. (Cheers.) But if I congratulate you upon the close of the session, I may congratulate you still more on the fact that at the termination of this, the fourth year of the present Government; that Government—the Unionist Government—is stronger in the country and in the House of Commons than it was at its commencement. (Loud cheers.) I think it may be interesting on this occasion to review the circumstances, and to endeavour to state the reasons why this state of things, so satisfactory to all of us, but at the same time so exceptional, has come about. And, in the first place, I should put as a reason for the increased strength of the Government the salient fact of the demoralisation of our opponents. (Loud cheers.) Gentlemen, Nemesis has overtaken the party—(loud cheers)—of disintegration. (Renewed cheers.) They have plenty of Home Rule in their own ranks—(laughter)—but they have also—as we always anticipated they would—very insufficient central control. (Cheers.) The Gladstonian party is constructed upon purely federal lines—(laughter)—but, gentlemen, where is the union of hearts?

(Loud laughter.) During the last few days a triangular—I may even say a quadrangular—duel has been going on, and the party has been torn by internecine strife. It is a painful spectacle :

Birds in their little nests agree,  
And 'tis a shocking sight,  
When children of one family  
Fall out, and chide, and fight.

(Loud and prolonged laughter.) But gentlemen, Mr. Labouchere, whom we must all treat as a serious politician—(laughter)—because he is the leader of the most influential section of the Opposition—(hear, hear)—and also because in order to qualify for his new position he has assumed of late an attitude and a style of portentous dulness. Mr. Labouchere warned us the other night that we ought not to fall into a fool's paradise, and that we must not suppose that because they were divided now, they would not be perfectly united when the time came to make an attack upon the Government. I think the warning is well timed, and I admit that it behoves us to keep our organisation together, and to be prepared for the great fight when the next general election comes. (Hear, hear.)

#### GLADSTONIANS IN SEARCH OF A LEADER.

But I am inclined to speculate a little further, and I am inclined to ask what is going to happen if, unfortunately, the Home Rulers at the general election should be unanimous, like Mr. Curran's fleas, and pull us out of bed. (Laughter.) What then would be the Government, and what would be the nature of the legislation we should have to expect from such a party? Well, gentlemen, it is not of the slightest importance who is to be the leader. That is a matter which interests a small section of the Home Rulers. During the last fortnight we may have appeared to the public to have been discussing the grants of the Royal Family. What we have really been doing is to settle the succession to the throne of the Home Rule party. But, gentlemen, as I have said, it does not matter in the least upon whom the choice ultimately falls, or who is to have the honour of leading—that is, of following the motley elements of which this party is now compounded. We know perfectly well that whoever the leader may be the strings will be pulled by the new Radicals, who



have shown that they know their power, and that they know how to use it. If they use their power, who is there among the men who lead the Home Rulers who can resist it or restrict it? Not Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone only lately has made to these men an almost passionate and sympathetic appeal, and it has been rudely brushed aside. And not Sir William Harcourt, whose sword is always at the service of the strongest faction—(laughter and cheers)—and certainly not Sir George Trevelyan, or Mr. Morley, who are as reeds shaken by the wind, and who yield to every gust of popular opinion.

#### AN APPEAL FROM THE NEW RADICALS TO THE OLD.

Under these circumstances I am inclined to imitate Mr. Burke, *longo intervallo*, and to make an appeal from the new Radicals to the old. I was brought up in the school of Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden—(cheers)—and those great leaders of the people never for a moment hesitated to withstand the people whom they served when they thought they were in the wrong. Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden had one aim throughout their political career. It was to raise the social and the intellectual condition of the masses of the people. And they resisted constitutional change unless it could be shown directly to tend to this result. They would have been the first, they were in their lifetime the first, to condemn the efforts at unsettlement which were made by mischief-makers and mere hunters of notoriety. But these new Radicals proceed on totally different lines. They care for nothing but a change in the Constitution. It is much easier to attack the Constitution than to propose well-considered legislative measures for the benefit of the people. (Cheers.) It is much easier to destroy than to construct, and there is not one of these men—I said it to their faces the other night, and I repeat it this evening—who has shown the slightest capacity or the slightest inclination to engage in constructive legislation. (Cheers.) They have not produced a single measure that can be proved to have added to the happiness of the people, and I do not believe, if their whole programme were carried out to-morrow, a single human being would be the better for it.

#### THE FRUITS OF THE UNIONIST ALLIANCE.

This brings me to what I should put forward as the second reason for the increased strength of the Government. They have set them-

selves during their term of office to promote the social well-being of the people. They have acted upon the belief that the era of constitutional change has come to an end—at all events, for a time. The power of the democracy has been established ; and now the question is, how shall the people use its power so as to promote the advantage of every section and every class? We, as a party above most men, have been taunted with having joined the Tories. Well, gentlemen, let us look at the facts. I have certainly endeavoured in the past to put forward a programme which it then seemed to me might well occupy the attention of the democracy as soon as the great constitutional change involved in the extension of the franchise was carried into effect. I put forward, in 1885, what was known as the unauthorised programme. It is quite true, as I was told the other night in the House of Commons, that for this programme I was denounced by some Tories as a leveller and an anarchist. They, I venture to think, did not altogether apprehend what it was I was proposing—(cheers)—but I have also to bear in mind that, if I was denounced by the Tories, I got very little support from the Liberals, and none at all from these “new Radicals,” who have now floated to the top under the exceptional circumstances under which we find ourselves. I want you to look at the results, and see whether, by joining the Tories, men like myself, who profess to be old Radicals—Radicals of the stamp of those of whom I have spoken—I want you to see whether we have altogether lost by our action. The unauthorised programme consisted of four points. The first was popular local government, based on our existing municipal institutions, and extended to the ✓ counties. The second was free education. The third was allotments and small holdings for the labourers, in order that the people in country districts might be kept on the land, and given an interest in the soil which they tilled. The fourth was graduated taxation. I have been accused sometimes of advocating a graduated income tax. That is a mistake. I advocated the principle of graduated taxation, but I did not myself propose to apply it to the income tax. I had in view the house tax and the death duties. Now, I want you to see that under this Tory Government whom we are accused of having joined, and our connection with which is said to have entailed the sacrifice of all our old convictions—I want you to see that all the points contended for have, at all events, received some practical

application. (Cheers.) In two successive sessions local government for England and Scotland has been fully conceded on popular representative and municipal lines. Free education has been conceded to Scotland, and no sensible man doubts that it must follow for England at no distant date. (Hear, hear.) The Allotments Act passed by the present Government has given to agricultural labourers for the first time the opportunity of getting upon the land. The result has been most striking; and already the number of allotments in the country has been doubled or trebled. (Hear, hear.) I have no doubt the principle will be speedily carried a little further, and we may hope to see some progress made towards the restoration of the yeomanry class—(cheers)—the extinction of which, I venture to say, is deplored as much by strenuous Conservatives as by the most ardent Radicals. As to graduated taxation, we have had a development of the principle in the Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, where it has been applied to the death duties, to which, in the first instance, I intended it should be applied, though I am ready to admit that at present it has been only on a small scale. Under these circumstances, as a practical man, and as a practical reformer, I am perfectly satisfied. (Cheers.) The result of the alliance between the Conservatives and the Liberals has been good, I believe, for the country in more ways than one. Good for the country, in so far as it has saved us from the monstrous proposals of the Home Rule Bill. (Cheers.) Good, also, in so far as it has secured attention to practical and important reforms that would have been thrown into the background by the exclusive discussion of Irish affairs during the whole of the last few years.

#### PROGRESS IN IRELAND.

Speaking of Ireland brings me to the third reason I shall give for the improved position of the Government in the country at the present time. They have carried into their Irish legislation the same spirit that has governed and animated their policy for Great Britain. In the first instance, they advocated the policy of the re-establishment of law and order; and they were right to put that first. (Cheers.) If that is a Tory policy, I am glad to know it. But I assert, without fear of contradiction, that it is also a democratic policy. (Cheers.) A democracy has greater interest even than any autocratic sovereign

to make its power respected ; and democracy is an empty name if the laws, which are made by the majority of the people speaking through their representatives, are not maintained and enforced. (Renewed cheers.) But if the Government did commence by securing the observance of the law, they have accompanied these measures of repression, as they are termed, with some measures of common sense as I should think most of us would regard them. They have accompanied them with wise proposals for political and social reform. In 1887 they passed a land Bill which was more extensive, which was more radical in its provisions than any land Bill which had preceded it ; and, as to which, I will only say that it has, at all events, cut the ground from under the feet of the agitators, and it has made it impossible that any eviction can take place any longer in Ireland for the refusal of the payment of unjust or unfair rent. (Cheers.) But they did not stop there. In 1888, and, again, during the present session, they have introduced proposals for great public works—(cheers)—to the carrying out of which I attach the greatest importance, and which will do much to stimulate the industrial resources of the country and to relieve the chronic distress in the west of Ireland. It is admitted on all hands—it is admitted by the Nationalist Irishmen themselves—that these proposals are wise and generous, and that they are calculated to benefit Ireland ; but the Nationalist members give to them a very tepid support, while they allow their allies, the new Radicals, to offer an obstructive opposition which may probably be fatal to them during the present session. (Cheers.) I think that the Irish people will sooner or later observe the course of their representatives—(cheers)—and that they will recognise the fact—for it is a fact—that these representatives care nothing for the material welfare of the population in comparison with their strictly political aims ; and that, on the whole, they would prefer to have a discontented population to deal with, because with a discontented population agitation becomes both possible and profitable. (Prolonged cheers.) This is what the Unionist Government has done, or attempted to do, for Ireland.

#### WHAT MORE WOULD A DUBLIN PARLIAMENT DO ?

Now, I ask any impartial man, what could a Parliament sitting in Dublin have done more for the benefit of the people whom it would

profess to represent? They could not alter the climate, they could not improve the character of the soil, they could not change the character of the people, they could not create mineral resources where nature has provided none. (Cheers.) There are some things they could have done, and would have done—I am not certain that they would have been to the advantage of the population—but they might, and probably would, have proscribed the minority and have confiscated their property. They would have entered into a bitter contest with the sturdy population of the North, and I am not certain that they would not have come out second best. (Cheers.) They might, and, in my opinion, they must have contested and repudiated their obligations to Great Britain. These are the things which the Imperial Parliament will not do, which a Parliament in Dublin might have done. I want to know in what way the majority of the people, either in Dublin or in Great Britain, would have benefited by the distinction.

#### LIBERAL UNIONISM PAST AND FUTURE.

Well, then, gentlemen, I say that under the circumstances the Liberal Unionists may well feel that they were justified in the attitude which they assumed at the close of 1885. Never before, I think, has a political party received from subsequent history so complete a justification. (Cheers.) They have saved the country from the greatest danger to its unity which has menaced it during our time, and at the same time they have been able to influence legislation and to assist the progress of most valuable and most important measures of practical reform. (Cheers.) I do not venture to predict the future. I do not know how long our Gladstonian friends will bear cheerfully, yet humbly, the yoke of Mr. Labouchere, or how long they will be content to march through Coventry under the cloak of the new Radicalism; but one thing I can assure them, and that is that if they become tired of their position the door of repentance is always open to them. Our arms are ready to receive them—(laughter)—and we will even for these prodigals kill the fatted calf. (Loud laughter.) But in the meantime, gentlemen, I impress upon you that it is our bounden duty to maintain our separate organisation—(loud cheers)—to maintain it in strength and increasing vigour. I saw that last night an allocution was addressed to my own constituents in

Birmingham by the noble lord the member for Paddington, in which he expressed an opposite opinion. He warned us that if we would save the Union we must become Tories. (Cheers and laughter) It seems hardly worth while that so many of us should change our name when the same result is to be secured by one man changing his. (Loud and prolonged cheers and laughter.) If Lord Randolph Churchill would call himself a Radical Unionist he would, I am sure, at once be received as a rather extreme member of that party. (Renewed cheers and laughter.) But he went on to say that if we did not at his behest adopt the title by which he still prefers to be called, we must submit to entire extinction. I am glad to know that his views are not shared by one single responsible member of the party to which he still belongs; and I am confident that the leaders of the Tory party know as well as we do that if the Union once becomes a party question the Union is doomed—(cheers)—and that at no distant date. The action of the Liberal Unionists has taken this great question out of party politics. (Loud cheers.) The Gladstonians see this perfectly well, and that is the reason why we much more than the Tories have to bear the brunt of their hostility and their abuse. The other day Sir William Harcourt boasted that the Liberal party had never committed itself to any reform which had not ultimately been carried into effect. That is perfectly true, I believe that is true historically; but what Sir William Harcourt forgot to say was that it was not the Liberal party that is committed to Home Rule, but only a section of it. (Hear, hear.) That is the result of our action. We have shown that not the Liberal party, but only a majority, which we believe will be a temporary majority, has surrendered to Mr. Parnell. (Cheers.) We claim to keep the old Liberal colours still nailed to the mast. We know that in doing this we incur great responsibility and heavy burdens; but we are encouraged by our experience of the past to believe that we shall accomplish in the end the patriotic duty which we have undertaken. (Loud cheers.)

*HUDDERSFIELD, September 17, 1889.*

## THE OLD LIBERAL POLICY FOR IRELAND.

[ON September 17th, 1889, Mr. Chamberlain visited Huddersfield, and spoke at a great meeting in the Town Hall which was crowded in every part. A resolution expressing confidence in Mr. Chamberlain and the other Liberal Unionist Leaders, congratulating the Government on the beneficial legislation for the United Kingdom which they had carried, and expressing satisfaction at their announced intention to introduce in the next Session of Parliament a measure for further facilitating Land Purchase in Ireland to be followed at an early date by a measure for extending in that part of the Kingdom a representative system of local government similar in principle to that created by recent Acts for England, Scotland, and Wales, was carried with a few dissentients.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, on rising to reply, was received with loud cheers. He said:—I am very much obliged to you for the resolution which you have just carried by so great a majority. I am not at all sorry to find that there is a minority, a considerable minority, present of our former friends, now members of the Gladstonian party, because in the course of what I have to say I shall wish to speak to them. In the meantime I have only to thank you for the warmth of your reception. I think my friend Mr. Huth said that your gratitude was due to the leaders of the Unionist party, because they gave up their holidays to come and address you. Perhaps that justifies me in making a mild protest against this continuous curtailment of the restful period which has hitherto been allowed to politicians. (Laughter.) You know that in the Middle Ages when Europe was disturbed by great wars the contending armies always went into winter quarters early in the autumn—(laughter)—and they did not emerge from them until late in the spring. I put in a plea for winter quarters for hard-worked politicians. (Hear, hear.) I do not suppose I shall get much

sympathy. (Laughter.) I think it very likely you may say that it is our own fault, and that we ought to know better. And, indeed, I must admit that on this occasion it is the Unionist party which has set the bad example. We have been talking, having it all our own way, and our opponents have maintained a most discreet silence. (Laughter.) But, gentlemen, we are told that this is not to last. Presently the Gladstonian batteries are to open upon us—(hear, hear)—and Mr. Gladstone and his chief lieutenants are going to descend into the fray. I find that in the first instance they are going to attack Wales. (Laughter.) I think that this is a most encouraging and hopeful fact. If the leaders of the party think it necessary that Sir William Harcourt, Mr. John Morley, and Mr. Parnell himself are all to go down to poor little Wales, which has been of all parts of her Majesty's dominions the one which has shown hitherto the most docile subservience to the new doctrines of Gladstonism, it must be that they think that even Wales is beginning to waver in its allegiance—(laughter)—and that there are signs that it is reconsidering its position. Whether that is so or not, I am perfectly certain that there is a movement generally throughout the country amongst those who accepted the Gladstonian doctrine, that they are beginning to wake up, and to think for themselves—(hear, hear)—and that many of them are beginning to ask themselves whether, after all, the change of front three years ago which shattered the Liberal party, which caused the secession of one portion of it, and threw the other into the arms of Mr. Parnell—whether this change of front, which has substituted the policy of revolution for the old Liberal policy of reform, may not have been a serious blunder, hastily conceived—(hear, hear)—imprudently executed, and which ought at once to be repaired. (“Hear, hear,” and cheers.) If I might tender any advice to the Gladstonian leaders, I would advise them in the coming campaign to pay a little more attention to the merits of the case and a little less to personalities—(hear, hear)—because I believe that with the free representation which we enjoy, the victory will be given according to the weight of argument, and will not be decided by the attack of sharp-shooters or skirmishing tactics. (Cheers.)

I want to-night, as briefly as I can, to recall to you the position in which we stand, and the causes that have led up to it.



## A CHALLENGE TO THE GLADSTONIANS.

The Liberal party is at the present time in a perfectly unprecedented situation. I remember in one of his letters or speeches in the autumn of 1885, Mr. Gladstone said something to the effect that he regarded it as his highest duty to preserve intact this great instrument of progress and reform. Yes, but it has come to be his fate to have shattered the Liberal party—(hear, hear, and cheers)—and for a time at least to have destroyed its usefulness. (“No.”) I do not think I have yet come to points which can be contradicted. (Laughter and cheers.) Now, what was it due to; what was the cause of this result? Here again I am saying something which cannot be contradicted. It was due entirely to the unexpected adoption by Mr. Gladstone in the latter end of 1885 of a policy of Home Rule which the whole of the party had previously rejected. (Laughter and cheers.) No change had occurred which had not been fully foreseen. It is perfect nonsense to tell us, as some have done, that this extraordinary right-about-face was due to the presence for the first time of eighty-six Irish Nationalist members in the House of Commons. Why, there was not a man in the House of Commons, not a Liberal or Conservative, who did not perfectly well know that when the franchise was extended the Irish Nationalist party would be increased, and that Mr. Parnell would have from eighty to ninety followers. That is no explanation at all, and for my part I have never ventured to attempt an explanation of Mr. Gladstone’s conduct. He has himself given various more or less sufficient reasons for the action which he took. I find his explanation to be inconsistent and contradictory. If it is satisfactory to others I must leave them to defend it. (Hear, hear.)

## PARTY LOYALTY.

But I have to deal with the act of that large majority of the Liberal party — men of patriotism, of ability, of judgment — who followed Mr. Gladstone in this exceptional course. I am not going to impute any bad or improper motive to them. I say their action was clearly due, in the first place, to their personal regard and esteem for the leader whom they had hitherto followed for many years with

perfect confidence; and it was due, in the second place, to an exaggerated idea of party loyalty. I do not say that those are bad motives. I say, on the contrary, that in the main they are estimable and unselfish motives—(hear, hear)—but I think you will agree with me that when great national interests are at stake even personal regard and party loyalty may be carried too far. (Hear, hear.) I had the other day a curious illustration of the way in which some people make a fetish of party loyalty. In my correspondence I receive letters from very many people—from foes as well as from friends—and the other day I had a letter from a gentleman who asked me, with much strength of language, how it was that I presumed to differ from the Liberal party—(laughter)—when I ought to have known that the Liberal party had always been right in the past—(laughter)—and must of necessity always be right in the future. (Renewed laughter.) I might have replied to my friend that I am altogether disinclined to admit his claim to regard the Gladstonian Liberals as constituting the Liberal party, whose traditions they have ignored and whose policy they have reversed. (Cheers.) I might have pointed out to him that if the Liberal party has always been right it must have been right in 1885, when it was to a man opposed to Home Rule—(hear, hear)—and we must be right who are opposed to it still. (Hear, hear.)

#### EACH MAN SHOULD THINK FOR HIMSELF.

But I prefer to rest my defence upon the claim which I make for every politician, to think for himself. (Hear, hear.) That was one of the cardinal doctrines of the Liberal creed—(hear, hear)—and I refuse altogether to accept this new doctrine of the infallibility either of a party or a leader—(hear, hear)—and I claim that our Gladstonian opponents, who have changed their opinions, should tell us what their new views are, and why they have adopted them before they ask for our acquiescence in them. I ask that they should tell us what their principles and their policy are, and that they should do so, not in the language of mere rhetorical flourish, but in plain words that can be understood of all the people. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Surely what I ask is not unreasonable. There are very few Gladstonian members—I will undertake to say that out of the

whole number there are not half a dozen who were not opposed to Home Rule previous to 1885. (Loud cheers.) They have been converted since. (Laughter.) I do not blame them. It may be that their conversion is worthy of imitation. But I say that in the three years since they were converted they must surely have found time to explain the creed that they have adopted, to tell us what the new religion to which they are committed is, and in this way they may help us also to find salvation. (Loud laughter and cheers.) Now, gentlemen, you will see, I am sure, that in all I have been saying my object is friendly to the orators of the Gladstonian party, who at this moment probably are preparing the speeches with which they are going to electrify us in the course of the next few weeks. I want to assist them. (Laughter.) I want to clear the ground for them. I ask them to join issue. I want them to help us to put before the country clearly and definitely the differences that divide us, in order that the country may decide. (Hear, hear.)

#### THE UNIONIST POLICY STATED.

We Unionists have had the first opportunity, and I venture to say that we have done our part. We have put before the country our policy. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) There is nobody with an atom of sense who can pretend that he does not know exactly what the Unionist Government and the Unionist party are going to do. (Cheers.) The Unionist party told you, when they were first returned to power, that they would use whatever coercion was necessary—(cries of “No, no,” “Order,” and cheers)—let me finish my sentence before you contradict—that they would use whatever coercion was necessary in order to maintain respect for the authority of the law. (Hear, hear.) Some say “No”. I say it is open to anybody to read the manifestos which were issued by the leaders of the Unionist party—by Lord Salisbury for the Conservatives, by Lord Hartington for the Liberal Unionists, and by myself and others. They are printed and they remain; and you will find in every one of them the declaration which I have just repeated to you. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) We stated that we would maintain the law, and we have done it. (Loud cheers.) We have done it with a success which has come sooner, and which has been more complete than any

one of us had dared to anticipate. And now, having maintained the law, and having restored Ireland to a state of comparative peace and order—for although there is here and there disorder in scattered districts, yet throughout the greater part of Ireland, order and peace prevail, and men go about their business without fear of molestation—(hear, hear, and cheers)—and without the desire of molesting others—having done this we proceed to the next stage of our policy, to the remedial policy which we have put forward as a substitute for the policy of Home Rule. (Loud cheers.) We have put this policy before the country, and we invite your support for it. (Cheers.) My object to-night is to win for this policy the support of those who call themselves Gladstonian Liberals, and if they are not even more inconsistent now than they have been in the past they must give it to me. (Cheers.) Of course I am not speaking of details; I am speaking of the general lines of this remedial policy. I say that the Government and the Unionist party will welcome criticism and suggestion from all quarters, provided it is honest criticism and honest suggestion. You cannot say any longer that the Unionists have no policy except a programme of coercion.

#### THE OLD LIBERAL POLICY.

On the contrary, we have put before you a great and comprehensive remedial policy—a policy which was the policy of the whole Liberal party before 1885. (Cheers.) Now I am going a step further about this policy. I am going to ask for the support of the Gladstonians for it; and whether we get it or not, I believe and predict that it will be carried successfully in spite of all obstruction, and in spite of opposition. But I am perfectly ready to admit that this policy would be greatly increased in its effect in Ireland, and be more influential, if we could secure the support of moderate men of all parties, not merely of the Unionist party, and it is only to the moderate men of the Gladstonian party that I venture to appeal. I assume that they are perfectly ready still to place national interests before the temporary advantage of the party to which they belong. (Cheers.) I do not appeal to Mr. Labouchere or to his followers. I do not appeal to Mr. Parnell or his followers. I regard the one section as mere mischief-makers—(hear, hear)—I regard the other

section as rootedly hostile to this country, as unlikely to support any policy that would have the satisfactory effect that we anticipate ; but I appeal to moderate Gladstonians. I say that this policy which we put before them is in every important point the policy which they were advocating only three years ago. (Cheers.)

#### WHY SHOULD NOT GLADSTONIANS SUPPORT IT?

They supported it then, why should they not support it now? They will say, perhaps, "Because we have found a better way; because we have discovered that we Englishmen and Scotchmen, associated with Irishmen in the government of the United Kingdom, are incapable of doing justice to Ireland; because we feel that the responsibility of the government of Ireland is too great for our weak hands, and therefore we are decided that we will establish a Parliament in Dublin to do this work for us, and that we will throw the responsibility and burden on their shoulders". But I want to point out to you that even this new policy, supposing it to be right, supposing it to be desirable to now establish such a Parliament in Dublin, is not an alternative to the policy of the Government as proposed, but is merely a different machinery to give effect to it. (Hear, hear.) What would be the first thing that the Dublin Parliament would do if it were as successful as Gladstonians hope it may be, if it were as wise as Parnellites say it will be, if it were as powerful as I hope it will not be? (Cheers.) What would this Parliament do? Why, of course, it would proceed to deal with the land question in Ireland, to deal with the question of local government in Ireland, to deal with the question of education in Ireland, and to promote the material and industrial resources of the country. (Hear, hear.) Well, gentlemen, I see we are getting on. (Laughter and cheers.) We are agreed so far. This is what this wise and powerful Parliament would do, and if it would be right to do it, why is it wrong for the Imperial Parliament to do it? (Loud cheers, and a voice: "They don't".) If the Imperial Parliament is willing—(a voice: "That's a question")—well, gentlemen, I say it is willing. (Cheers.) I say that there is not a single one of the four questions I have named which the Government have not publicly declared their wish and intention to deal with. They would be only too happy to deal

minster, resting upon and supported by the richest country in the world, much better than by one of the poorest countries in Europe, which would be burdened by the necessity of providing for the expense of its separate administration, at the same time that it had to contribute largely to the cost of administration in another country. Under these circumstances I press upon you—I am anxious to convince you by reason and by argument—I press upon you this fact, that at all events it would be desirable that the Imperial Parliament should be allowed, and encouraged and assisted, to deal with the questions which I have named, to carry out this remedial reform of which I have spoken, before we come to discuss the question of Home Rule. (Hear, hear.) I am appealing to the points of agreement between us. I say the time has not come for a quarrel yet. (Laughter.) I do not think we are afraid of a quarrel, but it seems absurd to enter upon it prematurely. Let us settle those things upon which we already have a perfect understanding. There is not a man in this room—and I will undertake to say that this room is representative of opinion outside—(hear, hear)—there is not a man in this room who will deny that all these things are desirable in themselves, are to be defended on their own merits. They are practicable and they can be accomplished, and accomplished speedily if you will only give us your assistance and unite to secure them. (Hear, hear.) And then, gentlemen, when they are settled, when this policy has been carried to a successful issue, if there are any persons who still desire a separate Parliament for Ireland, then will be the time for us to retire into opposite camps and to resume hostilities. And even then I think it would be a wise proceeding on the part of the leaders of the contending hosts before they engage in actual warfare to come to an understanding what it is they are fighting about. (Hear, hear.)

#### WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING ABOUT ?

Can any Gladstonian tell me what we are fighting about? (“Yes,” “No,” and a voice: “Against coercion”.) Against coercion! At the present moment coercion is reduced to a minimum. There is less coercion in Ireland at the present moment than there has been, I believe, at any time for the last seven years. There are less than a hundred people imprisoned for any offence under the

Crimes Act—under what you call the Coercion Act. (Cheers.) No, we are not fighting about coercion. We are fighting, as I suppose, about the creation of an Irish Parliament. (Hear, hear.) I have often tried to put myself in the position of a Gladstonian—of one of those Liberals who were converted to Gladstonianism—one who probably had never thought seriously about Home Rule, but who certainly, if you had asked him, would have declared himself against it up to 1885, and who then, without thinking much about it, on the authority of Mr. Gladstone, has declared himself in favour of it ever since. Those are the men we want to bring over to us. We want to convince them, if we can, that they have been just a wee bit hasty. (Hear, hear.)

#### HOME RULE IS NOT A SIMPLE MATTER.

What shall I say to such a man? I think probably I shall find that he is under the impression that it would be the easiest thing in the world to create Home Rule and a Dublin Parliament—you have only to hold up your hand and the thing is done, that it is the simplest and most natural business—and that to reject and repudiate it as we are doing is to be deficient in ordinary common sense, and to have a double dose of original sin. (Laughter.) Well, the first thing I should do would be to ask him to consider the matter a little further; to ask him whether he is quite sure that it is an easy business, and if it is an easy business, I should like to ask him why it was not done before. (A voice: "Ireland never had an opportunity to express her opinion before".) Well, I think you are entirely mistaken. Ever since the Union this question of an Irish Parliament has been before the country, and has been the keynote of all Irish agitation. (Hear, hear.) It was the policy of Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Butt—not shewn by a majority in Parliament, if you like—but does anybody doubt, has anybody ever doubted that it was the policy of the majority of the Irish people? Nobody doubts that when Mr. O'Connell went for repeal he had a majority of the Irish people behind him. The policy of Home Rule—I will not call it Home Rule—the policy of a separate Parliament for Ireland has been the policy of Irish agitation, and has been the policy of the majority of the Irish people, almost since the Union. Almost the whole time since the Union it has been before every English statesman, whether Conservative or Liberal, and it has been rejected

would be a disaster and a dishonour to the country. You cannot offend a Gladstonian more than by calling him a separatist. And they go further. There is not one of them who does not say that if the Irish demanded separation, if they asked for complete and absolute independence, he would refuse it, that he would resist it by force, and that, if necessary, he would use the army and navy to take away the privileges which the Irish would have abused. Now, then, I come back to the gentleman who, a little while ago, told me that we differ about coercion. No, we do not. We are both in favour of coercion, he as much as I. It is part of the principles of the Gladstonians that coercion—that is to say, whatever force may be necessary—should be used in order to resist the concession to Ireland of complete independence, which Mr. Morley tells us would be a disaster and a dishonour to this country. (Applause.) The only difference between us is as to whether the point has been reached at which coercion ought to be applied. We say, if you give Home Rule, you will have made separation possible, easy, inevitable. (Hear, hear, and “No, no”.) At least, you will admit that if we are right in that contention, we are right in using coercion to prevent it, because you would use coercion to prevent the same thing, although, at the moment, you do not think the necessity has arisen. Now, I want to impress this upon you. Let me recapitulate the points in my argument. I am speaking of our points of agreement. I say we are agreed—first, that separation would be a fatal thing, to be avoided at all hazards. In the second place, I say we are agreed that force must be used to resist separation, if necessary. In the third place, I say we were agreed, only three years ago, that Home Rule would inevitably lead to separation. Now, you see what the issue is. There is only one point between the Gladstonians and ourselves. We think, as they did three years ago, that Home Rule will lead to separation. They think now that it might be safely conceded.

#### WHAT IS MEANT BY HOME RULE?

Now, let us examine that. What do they mean by Home Rule? They have never condescended to details since the Home Rule Bill was defeated. One thing we are certain of—they do not mean the Home Rule Bill. There is no one that has had the courage to defend



that Bill since it was defeated. (Hear, hear.) I suppose they would say that they mean a separate Parliament in Dublin, with an executive dependent upon it for the management exclusively of Irish affairs. Do not you think that is a little vague? It seems to me that the same formula might be used to express anything, from a great national assembly with ambition and interests co-ordinate with the Imperial Parliament at Westminster down to a Metropolitan Board of Works, jobbing in public business for the benefit of its less scrupulous officials and members. (Cheers.) I will assume that our opponents mean the nobler of these two things. I will assume that they mean a Parliament in fact, as well as in name; and I will assume that, because they have told us that this Parliament must be a recognition and a representation of the separate nationality of Ireland.

#### IRELAND A NATION.

Have you ever thought what the recognition of the separate nationality of Ireland means? A separate nation has rights which are well understood, which are described in the text-books, which everybody knows to exist in a nation. It has the right to choose its own form of government. It has the right to make its own laws, to collect its own revenue, and to make its own tariff; it has the right to control its foreign relations; it has the right to establish, if it pleases, any church of its own; it has the right to create and maintain a military force, both for defence and offence. These are the rights of a nation. There is not one of these rights which has not been already claimed for Ireland by the Irish Nationalist leaders—(hear, hear)—and, although, at the present time, we do not hear any repetition of the claim, I do not believe that it has been withdrawn by a single one of them. (Hear, hear.) Whether it be withdrawn or not, I tell you it is as clear as the day that if you create an Irish national Parliament, that Parliament will not rest. I will go further, and say it ought not to rest—(hear, hear)—until it has extorted from your fears or your weaknesses every one of those rights which logically belong to a nation. If you grant these rights, you will have granted separation; if you refuse these rights, you will have to refuse by force, and you will have to refuse them under difficulties which yourselves will have created by handing over the ad-

ministration and executive of Ireland to what will be a hostile government. Now, here is the dilemma in which our Gladstonian friends must rest : either Ireland is a separate nation, or it is an integral part of the greater nation that we call the United Kingdom. If it is a separate nation, you cannot, and ought not, to refuse to it all the rights which belong to a nation. You ought to concede its absolute independence. If, on the contrary, it is only a part of a nation—if it be identified with and associated with Great Britain by its history, by common interests, and by its geographical position—if the order and peace of the smaller country and the security of the greater country alike depend upon their union, I say one Parliament—and one Parliament alone—must bear supreme and unquestioned authority in the United Kingdom. (Loud cheers.)

#### ULSTER AND CIVIL WAR.

I will only say one word on the other branch of the subject to which I referred. I said the Gladstonian party objected in 1885, and we object now, to Home Rule, because it would lead to separation and civil war. Our Gladstonian friends will never face this question of civil war, and yet they cannot ignore it. They insist upon putting aside as inconvenient the question, "How are you going to deal with Protestant Ulster?" You know that Ulster will refuse to submit herself to a Dublin Parliament—(hear, hear)—and you know that, in her refusal, she will have the sympathy of hundreds of thousands of the Protestant population in the south of Ireland. This is a considerable difficulty; it is not an imaginary one. Again, I appeal to Mr. John Morley. Writing in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1882, he said that "English statesmen would think twice, nay thrice, before they invited a squalid version of the Thirty Years' War". And still later, in 1883, he told his constituents that "separation would certainly lead to civil war, and involve the Irish people in misery more dreadful than any that has ever yet been inflicted upon them". Mr. Morley may have convinced himself that his fears as to civil war were groundless. Will he tell us how he has done so? Will he tell us what security he has taken to prevent these dangers which he once foreshadowed, and which he described in such vigorous language? It is no use saying to us, in the language

of sentiment and of optimistic philosophy, that there will be a union of hearts, and that we must run the risk. (Cheers.) We are not compelled to run the risk—(hear, hear)—of national disaster and dishonour, and we will not do so until, at all events, we have better assurances than those which have been given by men who have known how to adapt their utterances to the exigencies of the political situation, but who have shown themselves from the first to be hostile to Great Britain, and who even now derive their policy and their pay from the enemies of this country. (Loud cheers.) If Mr. Gladstone, if Mr. Morley, if any of the Gladstonian leaders have devised securities against these dangers, let them tell us what they are, let us judge, let the country judge, of their sufficiency. Meanwhile, Liberals are not likely to follow blindly leaders who either do not know or will not tell them whither they are going.

#### THE POLICY OF SILENCE IS PLAYED OUT.

Gentlemen, the policy of silence is played out. (Hear, hear.) The British people have a fund of common sense, which is not to be overcome by mere sentiment and rhetoric. The people will not take a leap in the dark, and they will not be led by side issues to a constitutional change which would break up the continuity of our history, which would alter our relations with foreign Powers, and which would enforce a change in all the details of our home government and administration. (Hear, hear.) Our Imperial Parliament has been in recent years untiring in its efforts to remove the material grievances and to improve the government of Ireland, and now it is better equipped than ever for the task, since it is representative, in the truest sense, of the whole power of the people. The guiding principle of a great and of a free democracy is justice—(hear, hear)—justice not to one class, but to every member of the community. (Cheers.) I believe that the British democracy will continue to place first amongst its obligations this great duty of justice, but it will also be mindful of the obligation cast upon it to preserve intact the honour and authority and power of England; and it will do this against the assaults of open foes, and against the more insidious tactics of dangerous and designing enemies. (Loud cheers.)

*NEWCASTLE, October 1, 1889.*

## AN APPEAL FROM THE NEW LIBERALS TO THE OLD.

[On October 1, 1889, Mr. Chamberlain addressed a crowded meeting in the Circus at Newcastle. A resolution of confidence in the Liberal Unionist leaders was carried, with only a few dissentients; and Mr. Chamberlain, on rising to reply, was received with loud and prolonged cheering.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN said:—Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you, on behalf of my colleagues, as well as for myself, for the resolution which you have just passed; and I thank you especially for the warmth of your greeting to myself. You know this is not the first time that I have been to Newcastle—(laughter)—nor the first time that I have addressed a public meeting in this hall. (Interruption, and cries of “Put him out”.) I think the gentleman says, “It was a different public”; but I assure you that on the previous occasion to which I have referred the public that I addressed was extremely intelligent and extremely well-behaved. It was a very interesting occasion. We were on the eve of the great agitation which subsequently gave us the extension of the suffrage and the redistribution of political power; and I need not remind you that I was warmly in sympathy with that agitation—(hear, hear)—because I believed that those who were then excluded from the franchise were as capable and as patriotic, and as careful of the interests and well-being and of the honour of their country, as any class which had previously been admitted to the rights of citizenship. (Hear, hear.) And now that the franchise has been given, I do not feel inclined to modify the opinion that I then held. The suffrage has been given to two millions of new voters, and, while these new voters were still inexperienced in their functions, a vast constitutional change was proposed to them by their trusted and popular leaders. It was supported by the whole of the machinery of the old Liberal organisation; and yet they were able to see the danger that lay concealed under these proposals, and they rejected that policy by a great and decisive majority, and drove its author

from power. I do not think that any democracy has ever been subjected to a more severe test ; and I rejoice that ours has borne the strain so well. (Hear, hear.)

#### WORK FOR THE GLADSTONIANS.

But the Gladstonians believe, or pretend to believe—(laughter)—that all this will be changed at the next election. They tell their deluded supporters—(laughter)—and they tell their Parnellite allies, when these from time to time begin to get impatient, that the flowing tide is with them—(hear, hear, and laughter)—and that it will soon sweep their opponents from the board. Well, you know that is what is said by every Opposition with the least pluck about it—(laughter)—and, for my part, I admire the temper which leads defeated troops, even in the darkest hour, to look forward to the occasion when they will have an opportunity of being defeated again. (Laughter and cheers.) But, gentlemen, it seems to me that they have less cause than usual for the confidence which they express. They have to convince thousands and scores of thousands of intelligent electors. (A voice: "And they will do it".) They may be able to do it ; but, up to the present time, they have not tried. (Laughter and cheers.) They may be able to do it ; but they have preferred to wait for something to turn up. (Laughter.) They have waited for the chance of the Unionist alliance breaking down, in the hope that the Conservative Government would do something stupid in their foreign policy, or in the belief that Ireland, by the action of the agitation which has been going on there, would be made ungovernable ; but they have not attempted—up to the present time, they have made no serious effort—to meet us in argument : to tell us why we were wrong when we voted against Home Rule ; to defend the Bill which we defeated ; or to explain to us what are the alternative proposals which they would put into their new Bill if they had the chance. (Cheers.) I think that you will agree with me that the Liberal Unionists, when they separated from their old allies, and from their old political friends, in presence of what they believed to be a real national danger, were not at that time irreconcilable, for we only asked to be convinced and converted. But no attempt was made ; every effort was made to browbeat and to bully us, but no attempt whatever was made to con-

are many here to-night who were present on the former occasion. (Cheers.) Have you changed your opinions? ("No," and "Yes".) If you have not changed your opinions, then I say that should be your policy now which was your policy then—(cheers)—and if you have changed your opinion, perhaps when you talk of traitors and renegades, you had best look for them amongst those who have abandoned their principles—(loud cheers)—who have surrendered their position without firing a shot or without even a council of war, and surrendered it to the enemies of their country. Is there any reason why you, or why I, should have changed our opinion upon this matter?

#### MAINTENANCE OF THE LAW A LIBERAL DOCTRINE.

Let us look into this policy a little more in detail. It has, as you will remember, two branches. In the first place we are pledged to maintain the law and to repress crime and outrage. I know that Mr. Gladstone continually says that we have broken our pledges about coercion. I challenge him to prove from the utterances of any one of the Unionist leaders, or from the statements made officially by any one of the Unionist organisations, that we have changed our policy in this respect. (Cheers.) We have some of us expressed, and expressed in strong language, our dislike of coercion, our regret that it should be necessary. I have said that I hate coercion. (Hear, hear.) I hate the name, and I hate the thing. (Hear, hear.) Our opponents are fond of quoting these and other garbled extracts, by which they hope to conceal their own inconsistency. They quote these statements separated from the context, and they refrain from telling you that I never expressed my dislike of coercion without coupling it with a plain statement that I was willing to use all the force that might be necessary in order to support the law, in order to maintain the authority of the law, which is the supreme expression of the will of the people, and the only guarantee and security of our liberties. (Cheers.) What is true of me is true equally of my colleagues. It was true of every Liberal until these recent times when Liberals seem to me to have forgotten altogether the true tradition of the Liberal party. (Cheers.) Anarchy and disobedience to the law—these were never Liberal or Radical principles. (Cheers.) I was reading the

other day a capital speech which was made by my friend Mr. Burt—(cheers)—in defence of a policy of coercion—in defence of Mr. Gladstone's policy of coercion, of his first Coercion Act in 1881—and I quote Mr. Burt because he is a man whom all respect—(hear, hear)—and because in this business he is one of the very few who can claim, I believe, to be absolutely consistent; for Mr. Burt, unless I mistake, was a Home Ruler—a pronounced Home Ruler—long before Mr. Gladstone thought it necessary to buy Mr. Parnell and his eighty-five supporters. This is what Mr. Burt says:—"If you have not order and obedience to law, liberty itself can have no existence. Is there any definition of liberty that will justify robbery and outrage, the destruction of property, the maiming of cattle, the murder of people for simply paying their rents?" (Hear, hear.) I say that was the view of every Liberal previous to 1886; it is the view of every good Liberal now. (Cheers.) I say that we are only fulfilling the pledges which we gave when we carry out with a firm hand this policy, and support and maintain the law.

#### HAS COERCION FAILED?

Has anything occurred since 1886 to show that this policy is a failure? On the contrary, it has succeeded beyond our most sanguine expectations. The Crimes Act—the last Crimes Act—has only been in operation for two years. During that time the number of persons who have suffered in any way injuriously under its provisions have been only an infinitesimal proportion of the whole population of Ireland. (A voice: "What have they suffered for?") I will come to that directly; but in the meantime I want to point out to you that not only very few persons have suffered, but that they have suffered very little, for the worst they have had to fear has been a few weeks or a few months of mild imprisonment. Well, but the effect of this limited application of force has been to effect a social revolution in the condition of Ireland. (Cheers.) And this policy, which you call a policy of coercion, but which I call a policy of law, has put an end to the policy of coercion which spread terror over the whole of Ireland before the law was put into force. (Cheers.) If I were inclined to bandy names with my opponents I should say that it was they who were the real coercionist party, because while those who

call themselves the victims of our coercion have suffered only very slightly, have had nothing more serious to complain of than the quality of their food and the visit of the hairdresser—(laughter)—the victims of the tyranny of the League, the tyranny for which these men have been imprisoned, have suffered by thousands, and scores of thousands. They have been murdered at their own firesides, they have been shot down from behind hedges, they have been surrounded and brutally beaten, their cattle have been tortured, they themselves have lost their property, all freedom of action has been taken from them by the sentence of the secret tribunal whose murderous oppression we have succeeded in putting an end to. (Cheers.) Our opponents remind us of Mr. Bright's saying that force is no remedy. They misquote most of those whose speeches they take the trouble to refer to. Mr. Bright did not say that force might not be necessary, but that force was no remedy for national discontent. We have never put it forward as effectual for any such purpose. We say, however, that force is the ultimate sanction of every law; and the application of it, even on a limited scale, in the present instance has been accompanied by the happiest results.

#### REMEDIAL LEGISLATION.

But we have never said that we confined our policy to the application of force. On the contrary, it is part of our policy now, as it was of the government which I defended five years ago, that the application of force should be accompanied by remedial legislation. And here also I claim that the Unionist Government, and the Unionist party, have fulfilled all their pledges. We have together supported and carried into law legislation the most liberal that has ever been known for giving privileges—unusual and extraordinary privileges—to the Irish tenants. I refer to the Land Act of 1887, which went much further in its concessions than even the land legislation of Mr. Gladstone; and to the Ashbourne Purchase Acts, which have been applied hitherto with the greatest possible advantage. But the Government has done more than that. They developed last session, and the session before, the policy of the industrial development of Ireland. Ireland is a very poor country. It cannot be treated in the same way as a rich country, and it is one



of the points which I beg you to bear in mind that separation would be disastrous for Ireland, because it would separate the poorer country from its richer neighbour. The Government—very properly I think—recognised the duty of the richer neighbour to do something for the poorer; and they have suggested and promoted a policy of industrial development, and, above all, a policy for the relief of those congested districts in Ireland which, having an overcrowded population, are constantly and vainly struggling to gain a subsistence in spite of the conditions of an unfruitful soil and an inclement climate. They have had no sympathy, they have had no support, from Mr. Gladstone, and they have been hampered and delayed by the shameless obstruction of some of his supporters; and yet I venture to say that there is more seed of promise for the practical relief of Irish distress in this legislation than can be found in all the projects of constitutional change which Mr. Gladstone, or any other Home Ruler, can possibly propose. (Cheers.)

#### IRISH LAND PURCHASE.

But this legislation, important as it is, sinks into insignificance beside the intention which the Government have announced of dealing next session—of attempting, at all events, to deal next session—in a final manner with the land question in Ireland. (Cheers.) I can quote to you every authority on the Irish question in proof of the acknowledged fact that the origin and cause of Irish disaffection—the root and origin—is to be found in the agrarian question. To deal with that question has been the constant object of Liberal policy during the past generation. Why are we to abandon it now? Why are we to give it up, and throw it to the winds, and to take up an entirely brand-new policy in its place, because Mr. Gladstone has failed? It is quite true Mr. Gladstone has tried his hand twice on land legislation, and he has not succeeded. But is that any reason for giving up the effort to secure the object which Mr. Gladstone himself and all of us admitted to be desirable—nay, essential, if you are to secure the peace and order of Ireland? Mr. Gladstone would not have failed if he had accepted the advice which was given to him by Mr. Bright, who in this matter, as in so many others, seems to have had an instinctive perception of what

was right and necessary. (Cheers.) Mr. Bright interested himself in the Irish question before Mr. Gladstone had publicly committed himself to deal with it. And from first to last Mr. Bright laid it down that there could be no satisfactory solution of the Irish land difficulty which did not give facilities to the tenant to become the absolute owner of the land he cultivates. (Cheers.) Every Act, every provision in legislation, which has been based upon this principle of Mr. Bright's, has been a success. That is true of the Bright clauses, as they are called, of the Church Act, and of the Land Act of 1870. It is true, above all, of the two Ashbourne Acts introduced by the present Government. As far as the application of these measures has gone, they have been entirely successful. They have brought peace and order where beforehand discontent and disaffection prevailed. Why should not we continue on the old lines? Mr. Gladstone has failed; that only shows that Mr. Gladstone is not infallible. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Perhaps it shows also that when he makes us an entirely new proposition—a proposition which we take to be dangerous, a proposition which, if it should unfortunately succeed, will undoubtedly bring great risks and disasters in its train—that it would be wise for us to pause and consider whether we have not some better guarantees than his assurances. But in the meantime I say that we are encouraged by the experience of the past to go on on the old Liberal lines—(hear, hear)—and at least we may be satisfied that in doing this we run no risk of incurring irremediable harm, or of endangering the best interests either of Ireland or of Great Britain. (Cheers.)

#### THE DANGERS OF THE HOME RULE BILL.

Now, that brings me to the second point to which I wish to draw the attention of the Gladstonians. My first point is that they can show no reason why we should give up the old Irish policy. Rome was not built in a day, and no policy could settle the Irish question in a few minutes, or even in a few years. But the old Liberal policy had at all events produced beneficial results, and a continuance of it might have been expected to produce still better results. But my second point is that the policy which they offer to us is a dangerous policy; and I ask them, if they wish to convince us, to try and show

us by arguments, and by proof, and by evidence that our fears are groundless, and that Home Rule—that some form of Home Rule can be devised which will not lead to separation or to civil war. Can they prove to us that the Home Rule Bill was not open to the objections that we took to it? Indeed they cannot. They are precluded by their own declarations, and since that unfortunate bill was destroyed they have apparently thought that the less said about it the better. (Cheers.) They have been marvellously silent on its merits or demerits, but they have said enough to enable us to know that they admit that it was an impracticable measure, badly and hastily put together—that the proposal to withdraw the Irish members from the House at Westminster was fatal to Imperial unity, and that under such circumstances it would have been impossible to maintain the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. They admit that the restrictions by which it was sought to limit the powers of the new Parliament in Dublin were restrictions which were contrary to all Liberal principles, and which could not possibly have been maintained. They admit that a measure of this kind could not have been—would not have been—a final settlement of Irish discontent. But, gentlemen, I wonder that it has never struck them that under these circumstances they ought to be very grateful to us for having prevented the passage of such a measure. (Cheers.) It is thanks to us, and to us alone, that this futile, irritating, and mischievous bill was destroyed and rejected. It is thanks to us that the people have had time to consider and appreciate the dangers which they so narrowly escaped.

#### A SPECULATIVE TRANSACTION.

But now, when we go a step further, when we ask them in order to avoid the possibility of a similar danger in the future to let us know beforehand what it is they propose, and to take us into their confidence, to tell us how they will avoid the evils which they admit lay hidden in the Home Rule Bill of Mr. Gladstone—when we ask them for this—and it seems to me a reasonable demand—(hear, hear)—we are met with silence or with evasion; and our Gladstonian friends admit their past failure and at the same time ask us for implicit confidence in their future skill. (Loud laughter.) Well, gentle-

men, that is not the way to win votes—at all events not from intelligent electors ; and I cannot help thinking that the Gladstonians are rather too apt to under-estimate and under-rate the intelligence of the audiences they address. (Laughter and hear, hear.) Instead of relying upon argument, instead of grappling with the real issue, they seek to ride off on side issues and personal questions. (Hear, hear.) I am glad to say that these tactics are not universally approved, even amongst Gladstonians. There is some independence left in the ranks, and I observed recently a speech by Mr. Asquith—a rising lawyer of their party—(cheers)—and more recently an article by a member from this district, Mr. Atherley Jones—(hear, hear)—which show very clearly that these two gentlemen at all events are beginning to get a little uneasy at the policy of stealthy suppression which is mistaken in some quarters for statesmanlike reserve. (Loud laughter and cheers.) I dare say you noticed the other day an announcement in all the papers that Mr. Gladstone was going to address an important speech to a deputation that was to wait on him at Hawarden. No doubt the occasion was one when a leader might well be expected to break silence. There were five bye-elections to be decided. One of them has been decided—(cheers)—and I trust that others will follow suit. It was natural, under these circumstances, that the wire-pullers should think that a great effort should be made. Well, how did Mr. Gladstone use his opportunity? Did he deal with what is the one issue which separates Liberals at the present time ; and has been since 1886? Did he meet our objections? Did he try to win us over? Did he point out how foolish are our fears? Did he give us any evidence that he had learned by experience ; and that he had devised securities and guarantees which would not lay his policy open to the objections we took up before? Not a bit of it. I reckon that Mr. Gladstone spoke 640 lines of newspaper print, and out of this vast mass of spoken matter he devoted just forty-two lines which, by the greatest stretch of imagination, could be supposed to be directed to the real issue which separates us, and to the question of Home Rule and a separate Parliament for Ireland. Just think of that—forty-two lines, seven per cent. ! (Laughter and cheers.) Why, it is a poor dividend for such a speculative transaction. (Laughter and cheers.) Seven per cent. devoted to explain a policy which has divided the Liberal party ;

which has disorganised and demoralised the finest army that ever a Liberal statesman was called upon to lead. (Cheers.)

#### REASONS FOR HOME RULE EXAMINED.

But it may be said that Mr. Gladstone can get a great deal into forty-two lines. It may be that in these forty-two lines is contained the sublimated and concentrated essence of his policy. ("Right.") Well, let us see. He spoke about Home Rule; he gave us three reasons—I suppose they are principal reasons—why we should adopt his policy. What are they? The first is that you will make amends for the wrongs done to Ireland by its misgovernment for 700 years. Well, that is a long way to go back. (Laughter.) You know Mr. Gladstone himself has told us that his researches into Irish history have only been rather recently undertaken. (Laughter.) He did not know before 1886 that Pitt was a blackguard—(laughter)—but assume him to be right. Suppose that the government of Ireland has been bad, even up to 700 years ago. I respectfully suggest to Mr. Gladstone that it is not practical politics to grant Home Rule now, because 700 years ago a wrong was done to Ireland. Is that any reason why we should grant to Ireland now a concession which we believe would be fatal to our interests, and fatal also to the best interests of Ireland? (Cheers.) But that does not show the full absurdity of this proposal. Mr. Gladstone told us some time ago in one of his speeches—I think that was a new discovery too—(laughter)—that the great majority of the present Irish population were of British descent. (Laughter.) But look at this. For a wrong 700 years old you are to find a remedy and redress by offering concessions to the descendants, not of the people who suffered the wrong, but of the people who committed it. (Loud laughter and cheers.) There can be no doubt, I think, gentlemen, that Mr. Gladstone's logic, like his history, is becoming very Irish indeed. (Laughter.)

#### IRISH REPRESENTATION AT WESTMINSTER.

Then he tells us, as his second reason, that we shall regain the use and control of our own Parliament at Westminster. That would

indeed be a blessing. (Laughter and cheers.) I admit at once that that is a most important object to secure, and there is hardly a sacrifice that I would not make for such a purpose. But how is it to be secured? You may remember that that was a strong argument of the supporters of the old Home Rule Bill, and they had something to say for themselves, because in that Bill we were to lose the benefit of the assistance of the Irish members. They were not to come to Westminster, and the representation of Ireland was to cease. Then, indeed, we might have had the control and use of our own Parliament. But now all that is abandoned; now you are to give an Irish Parliament, and at the same time you are to have the Irish in Westminster too—in your Parliament. How do you think for a moment this is going to work? Suppose the Irish Parliament in Dublin is established, sooner or later a majority in that Parliament will come in conflict with the majority of the Parliament at Westminster about finance, about payment of the tribute, about the right of the Irish people to levy their own tariff, and to protect their own industries against Great Britain; upon the right of the Irish Parliament to endow religion, or upon any one of the numberless questions upon which public opinion in Ireland may very likely differ from the public opinion of England. Up to that time I daresay the Irish will have been very remiss in their attendance at Westminster, because they will have their own little affairs to attend to in Dublin. But when these difficulties arise they will come over here in a flock, and they will once again go through all the familiar processes of obstruction. They will hamper and harass, and perhaps turn out the British Government. They will, perhaps, be in a position to hold the balance of power as they have before; but under these new conditions the causes for their intervention will have multiplied, and the importance of their intervention will be increased; and, believe me, you will have to go on until they have extorted from the weakness of your own Parliament, or from whichever party is willing to pay for Irish support—until they have extorted all the concessions which they desire, and which will give them their complete independence. You will not regain the use and control of your own Parliament. On the contrary, you will not have one moment's peace until you have conceded the last and the uttermost demand of the most extreme of the Irish Nationalists. (Cheers.)

## THE UNION OF HEARTS.

There is one point more which Mr. Gladstone referred to, and that is his favourite doctrine of the "union of hearts". (Laughter.) He referred to it in eloquent language. All I will say about it to-night is that this is rather in the nature of an assertion and a prediction than in the nature of evidence and proof. Mr. Gladstone has unfortunately made similar predictions before, and they have not come true. If you read the speeches which he delivered to the House of Commons when he recommended them in 1868, and again in 1870 and in 1881, to disestablish in the first case the Irish Church, and in the second to pass his two land Bills, you will find that he then declared that this was the way to reach the hearts of the Irish people. Well, he must admit, his friends must admit, that he has been too sanguine. On all these occasions, at all events, although he has not succeeded as he desired and as he hoped, yet at least he has done no irreparable injury to the interests of the United Kingdom. (Cheers.) Now, gentlemen, we might be willing to risk something on his authority, but we will not risk all, not even on his authority—(cheers)—and until he can give us some proof that there is no danger in these proposals—until he can convince us that he has discovered efficient and satisfactory securities, he will not be able to rally to his standard those whom he drove from his side by his Home Rule Bill. (Cheers.)

## A MOMENTOUS DECISION.

Ladies and gentlemen, I say that these reasons, which represent very well, in much more eloquent language, perhaps, but still in effect, the ordinary platitudes of Gladstonian speakers, are inadequate and insufficient to convince us. It was not for a slight cause, nor with a light heart, that we separated ourselves from our leader, and from the comrades with whom we had so often marched to battle; and even now we would not think harshly of them, and we are ready to believe that, having made this extraordinary and rapid change of front, they have at least since been able to convince themselves of the wisdom and justice of the course they have taken. (Cheers.) But we complain that they do not try to convince us, too; and we say that as long as this is the case, for us the acceptance of this new creed

which they have embraced would be a shameless apostacy, unworthy of any honourable man. (Cheers.) I wish, ladies and gentlemen, I had it in my power to impress upon you my own sense of the momentous character of the decision which you have to take. In past ages there have been empires as great and as powerful as our own which have perished owing to the crimes or the weakness of rulers who exercised despotic sway over a dependent population of serfs—(hear, hear)—but it is not to any similar cause that England will owe her downfall from her high estate. Her people have claimed and won for themselves the right to direct their own destinies. They cannot cast the responsibility on Monarch or on Minister, and it is only by their own weakness, by their apathy, by their criminal indulgence, that the foundations of our national greatness are to be undermined, and the mighty fabric of our dominion shattered or destroyed. (Loud cheers, during which the right hon. gentleman resumed his seat, having spoken for nearly an hour.)



*HOUSE OF COMMONS, March 11, 1890.*

## THE PARNELL COMMISSION.

[The Judges appointed by the Special Commission Act to inquire into the charges and allegations made by the *Times* against the Irish members having reported, the First Lord of the Treasury proposed a resolution thanking the Judges and adopting the Report. In the course of the Debate, Lord R. Churchill took exception, on constitutional grounds, to the appointment of the Commission.]

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, who was received with Ministerial cheers, said :—  
Mr. Speaker, the House has just listened to a constitutional speech on a grave subject, couched in moderate language, and if I am unable to accept all that is in that speech I hope I shall not fail to deal with it in the manner which it deserves. The noble lord (Lord Randolph Churchill), I think, need not fear from me or any member of this House that we shall scorn his advice. We may not all agree with him or be able to accept the assumptions that underlay the latter part of his speech, that if we accepted his advice we should place the Unionist party again in a majority of 100 in this House—(laughter)—but we shall not be inclined to treat with disrespect the counsels which he from time to time gives us. The speech which the noble lord has just made, as he must himself perceive, might have been made with greater propriety on the second reading of the Commission Bill. He has told us the reasons which prevented him from speaking on that occasion. All I can say is that having spoken now we are under the disadvantage of dealing with circumstances which are two years old, and which are not fresh in the recollection of all. My recollection of these circumstances does not agree with his. He spoke of the charges which had been made against hon. members, and he said the Government must have come to the conclusion that there were *primâ facie* grounds for those charges. I do not remember that the

Government or any member of the Government ever said there was a *prima facie* case against hon. members. (Hear, hear.) The noble lord said that if they held that opinion they ought at once to have instituted a criminal prosecution. But if upon such rumours, which have now turned out to be calumnies, the Government had instituted a prosecution against those who were their political opponents they would then have been open to all the censure which the noble lord now throws upon them. As I understand the position, her Majesty's Government treated these allegations as libels—(laughter from the Home Rule members)—which might or might not be justified, but as libels against public men, and they desired that these public men should take the usual course for vindicating their character. It was on the invitation and at the request of hon. members themselves that this matter was made the subject of inquiry. (Hear, hear.) It was not raised by the opponents of hon. members. ("Oh.") It was raised by hon. members themselves—(hear, hear)—who claimed a committee of this House. (Opposition cheers.) The question then was not whether there should be an inquiry. I could show that at that time there was not the slightest difference of opinion as to the necessity for inquiry and the character of the inquiry, but only as to the character of the tribunal. (Hear, hear.) I do not think that upon that any great constitutional question arose.

#### THE OBJECTIONS TO THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

I think it has been said in some of the leading organs of the Home Rule party that this Special Commission was my pet proposal. When I have given the authority for this statement I need scarcely say that it is entirely untrue. (Laughter.) I never heard of it until it was suggested by the Government. But now that the action of the Government is called in question, I will say that in my judgment the circumstances have shown that they were right. (Ironical Home Rule cheers.) Experience and the result of this inquiry have shown that this tribunal was the best and the only tribunal that could have been appointed. (Hear, hear.) I doubt whether upon that point there will be much contention. I am not speaking of the conclusions of the tribunal—I am speaking of the conduct of the inquiry. All the objections made at the time of the appointment of the Com-

mission by hon. members on this side of the House have been shown to be without foundation. I have taken out from the debate a list of all the objections taken. It was said that the Judges would not be impartial. (Home Rule cheers.) Yes, but it is not said now. (Cries of "Yes, yes" from the Irish members.) Well, hon. and right hon. gentlemen who have spoken have said exactly the reverse. ("No.") I will quote the exact words directly. The next objection was that the charges against the respondents could not be specified. But the first thing that the Judges did was to demand a specification of the charges. (Hear, hear.) It was said that *The Times'* charges were so vague that the inquiry would last at least ten years. It was said that all the guarantees and safeguards of accused persons were omitted—(hear, hear)—that the ordinary judicial procedure would not be insured—(hear, hear)—and that *The Times*, if found guilty, would enjoy an absolute immunity from all subsequent proceedings. (Hear.) It was said, for instance, that an action for libel would not be allowed against *The Times*—(Ministerial cheers and laughter)—that it would be impossible for those injured respondents to have any solace for their injuries. Every one of those objections has been proved to be without foundation. (Hear, hear.) The inquiry which took place has been exhaustive, every charge has been inquired into, it has been examined upon, has been replied to, has been cross-examined upon.

#### THE ALTERNATIVE EXAMINED.

Now I ask the House as sensible men whether a Parliamentary Committee—which was the alternative—would have done better, or, indeed, would have done as well. (Hear, hear.) Again—I am only speaking of the nature of the inquiry—I have heard it stated in the debate, that a Parliamentary Committee would have brought the matter to an earlier conclusion. How could it have done so? A Parliamentary Committee might have examined into the whole of the charges, according to the instruction given to the Judges; but if they had done so, is it possible that they could have accomplished this work in anything like the time in which the Commission performed it? (Hear, hear.) Every one knows what the procedure is before a Parliamentary Committee, that it is impossible to do the work with dispatch; every member of the Committee has the oppor-

tunity of examination, and in these circumstances I think it quite possible that if such a Committee had been appointed it would not have completed its work during the present Parliament. ("Oh," and Hear, hear.) Therefore, so far as the inquiry goes, it must be satisfactory to hon. members below the gangway. It was as exhaustive as they themselves could have wished it to be, and I do not think that any of their witnesses has been refused a hearing, or anything which they wished to say has not been brought out.

#### THE IMPARTIALITY OF THE JUDGES.

The next point is this—is there any reason in the constitution of the tribunal which should induce the House to receive with suspicion its conclusions? I said just now I would refer to the statements of my right hon. friends about the Judges. My right hon. friend the member for Mid-Lothian admitted their assiduity, their ability, their learning, and their perfect and absolute good faith. (Mr. Gladstone: "There was a qualification".) I will come to the qualification of my right hon. friend also. My right hon. friend the member for Wolverhampton (Mr. H. H. Fowler) went further; he admitted the absolute impartiality of the Judges. My hon. and learned friend the member for South Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) spoke of their decision as an impartial judgment. Now, it is quite true there were qualifications. My right hon. friend behind me spoke of "prepossessions"; the hon. and learned member for South Hackney spoke of "prejudices". My right hon. friend did not go so far; he said, "I do not say prepossessions, I will call them political sentiments". Very well; granted that the Judges, like every one else, have personal prepossessions and political views. Is it contended that that vitiates their judgment and their findings upon matters of fact? Cannot they distinguish between what are matters of fact and matters of opinion? I will say, for myself, that when the Judges give their opinion as to the effect of the rejection of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill by the House of Lords, or as to the exact influence upon the condition of Ireland of the passing of the Land Act, I think these are matters of opinion upon which I am quite willing that the views of others should prevail over those of the Judges. (Hear, hear.) But as regards matters of fact, is there any reason that their prepossessions should vitiate the findings at which the Judges have arrived?

## THE ADOPTION OF THE REPORT.

My right hon. friend behind me says that, holding these opinions, I am yet going to adopt the Report. Yes, but I maintain that it is straining language to say that if you adopt the Report you are pledged to every word of the Report, to every expression of the Report, to every adjective. (Hear, hear.) No, sir; I think most of us in the course of our lives have had to adopt reports by the hundreds and thousands, and it has never been held that in adopting any report, however long, you are committed to every single expression of it. By adopting a report you adopt the findings, the general effect; you are not pledged to every word. Suppose, however, that you refuse to adopt it—and as I am going step by step I must again remind the House that I am speaking now only as to the conclusions on matters of fact, not of opinion. Suppose you refuse to adopt the Report of the Judges, to whom are you going to appeal? (Cheers.) And here is a curious inconsistency in the arguments of my right hon. friends. They say that this House is invited to exercise a judicial function for which it is unfitted, and yet they appeal from the Judges to the House in order that we may exercise a judicial function. (Lord R. Churchill: "The motion does so".) No, the motion does not. I differ from the noble lord, and will endeavour to make my meaning clear to him directly. An appeal to the House means this, whether it be a Committee of the House or the House as a whole—it means an appeal to them to re-try the facts of a case as to which it has been said by my hon. and learned friend the member for South Hackney that not one half of the House has read the report and not one tenth has read the evidence. (Hear, hear.) The difference between the proposition of the Government and the propositions moved or to be moved by the proposers of the various amendments is this—the Government asks the House to discharge a ministerial function, to adopt the report and not to pronounce a judicial opinion. But by the amendments you are asked to take the findings of fact by the Judges, to deal with them, to distinguish between them, and to pronounce your own judgment upon them. (Cheers.) It has been said on behalf of the Opposition that this House is disqualified to perform such a task. This House, it will be admitted, has prepossessions, prejudices, political opinions,

and in consequence it is contended that we are disqualified to pronounce a judicial opinion. I say we are not asked to pronounce a judicial opinion. I vote for the resolution of the Government because it does not ask us to pronounce a judicial opinion, but leaves that to the nation. (Loud cheers and counter cheers.) You have confidence in the nation. (Cheers.) You believe that it will do you justice. Then why do you not leave the question in their hands? (Loud Ministerial cheers.)

#### FINDING THE FACTS.

Now I must touch upon another statement of the noble lord, which was, I think, in continuation of a statement made by the right hon. member for Mid-Lothian. It has been said by both that this report is a vote of censure; that by adopting it you are condemning hon. members, your colleagues in this House. I deny that altogether. We have been told by every speaker on this side that this Report is a triumphant acquittal upon every charge, which is of the slightest importance. How can a triumphant acquittal be a vote of censure? (Ministerial cheers.) I go further, and say that by adopting the Report we adopt, as I have said, only the findings of fact as they are put before us by the Judges—we adopt them as the nearest approach to truth we can get in this matter. But I do not find in the Report one single word of condemnation by the Judges; from one end of the Report to another it is an impartial judicial statement—such things were done, such words were used, such consequences followed; as to whether good or bad, laudable or to be reprobated, the Judges do not say one word. By adopting the Report you do not say either. (“Oh, oh,” and laughter.) I do not mean that you may not think it to be your duty to determine and say a good deal by way of complement to this Report. All I point out is that if you stop at what the Government proposes you pronounce neither censure nor praise. In all inquiries of this kind there are necessarily two stages—the first is the finding of the facts, and that is the stage the Judges have brought us to; the second is the appreciation of the findings. That is what you are at liberty to deal with if you like, and we have been called on to give an appreciation of the facts, by my right hon. friends, but in this case our first business is to adopt the findings before we proceed

to comment upon them. That is what we are called upon to do. It is said that the Judges were precluded from taking into account political and historical considerations, and these political and historical considerations are essential before pronouncing finally on the matter, as they may turn things which would otherwise be offences into praiseworthy acts. That I admit, but I say it was not for the Judges to do that. If it is your opinion that judgment should be pronounced on the findings of the Commission, then I say that your judgment on the whole Report should be a full comment upon the findings, and not upon those particular portions of the Report which seem to suit your present circumstances. What I have said applies to the amendment in the name of the hon. member for Loughborough (Mr de Lisle) as well as to that of the hon. member for Stockport (Mr. L. Jennings). If I had to choose between any of these amendments I should say that his is the least objectionable. Undoubtedly the offences of which the respondents have been acquitted are more serious, more infamous, and more damaging charges than the charges which have been proved against them. Therefore, if you are to pick out any part of the Report at all you should pick out that part which contains the most important charges. But why should you pick out one part and not accept the whole? If, as you contend, the whole Report is a verdict of acquittal, and if, after taking into account the pleas of palliation which have been put forward, you can say that the action of the respondents has been, on the whole, laudable, why do you not deal with the Report in that sense? I listened with the greatest admiration to the speech of my hon. and learned friend the member for South Hackney. He is a great forensic advocate, but I do not think that that was the speech of an advocate. It was not a speech made from a brief or from instruction. It was a speech made from his heart and conscience. (Hear, hear.) But my hon. and learned friend, if he had chosen, might have produced an amendment in the very words of that speech—an amendment which I believe would have been practically accepted with unanimity by the House. In the course of that speech my hon. and learned friend spoke of his loathing for crime and assassination and condemned in the strongest terms intimidation in any shape or form. He deplored the excesses by which a great popular movement had been stained, and regretted that the leaders of that movement had failed in any respect to denounce intimidation.

("No, no," from the Home Rulers.) If he had been willing and had seen his way to draw up an amendment expressing those sentiments he might have taken his choice of the other amendments before the House, which declare the satisfaction of the house at the acquittal of the hon. members on still graver charges. But we are asked to pick and choose. We are to treat some findings as being of no importance, and others as being of supreme importance and requiring particular notice.

### THE CHARGE OF TREASON.

I am bound, even at the risk of wearying the House, to examine once more the character of those findings which we are asked to ignore. There is no doubt about the findings which acquit the respondents. Every one admits gladly that the respondents have been completely acquitted of personal complicity with crime. But these are not the only charges against them, or the only charges which they themselves demanded should be inquired into. They asked that the charges in "Parnellism and Crime," including abstention from condemnation of crime, connivance with crime, and indirect but moral complicity with crime, should be inquired into. (Cheers.) Let me examine the findings of the Judges in reference to this matter. The speech of the hon. member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) was a sort of *apologia pro vitâ suâ* and if it were to be accepted it is not condemnation which is due to hon. members, but we ought to pass a resolution declaring that the hon. member and his friends had deserved well of their country. (Laughter and cheers.) The hon. and learned member for East Fife (Mr. Asquith) took under his special protection the other day the Clan-na-Gael. The Clan-na-Gael, it appears, is a friendly society. (Laughter.) Well, if it is a friendly society, the Land League and the National League must be philanthropic associations for preventing murder and outrage. (Cheers and laughter.) These are questions which need a little closer examination. I shall pass over briefly the finding as to conspiracy to secure independence, and what is called the charge of treason. I admit that I attach no importance to it in the present debate. (Ironical Opposition cheers.) It is perfectly true that conspiracy of the kind which is proved, conspiracy to obtain independence is not



a crime as we understand it. It is no personal dishonour to a man. In the history of Ireland, aye, and in the history of England, men have been guilty of similar conspiracy to secure independence—which can be called treason, but for which they are now held in high honour and esteem. The only importance I attach to that finding is a political importance. I do not gather that at the time when this conspiracy was going on—it is pretended now that it has been since abandoned—it was announced to the world by the hon. members engaged in it. It was not their professed object. It was cloaked and concealed by what they called the constitutional agitation. (Hear, hear.) What guarantee have we that the same thing is not going on now? (Ministerial cheers.) What proof have we that if Home Rule is granted we shall not find behind it the Fenian organisation using Home Rule as a first step to independence? (Cheers.)

#### MATTERS OF FACT OR OPINION.

But I go on to what I think is the real issue—the findings numbered 4 to 9 in the Report. What is it which has been contended with reference to these findings? In the first place it is said that they are findings in the nature of matters of opinion and that they can be classified and distinguished in some way from the other findings, by which the respondents have been acquitted of the more serious offences. I say a moment's examination will show that the contention cannot be maintained. I defy any one to make a distinction in the findings between those which appear at first sight to be hostile and those which appear favourable. There is a finding that—"It is not proved that payment was made to Byrne to enable him to escape from justice". Is that a finding of fact or is it not? That must be a finding of fact. What do you say to this? "That payments were made to persons injured in the commission of crime." I am not speaking of their respective gravity; I am only saying, Can it be pretended that one opinion is a matter of fact and that the other, as the hon. member for Fife sneeringly observed, is "an *obiter dictum* of the Judges"? (Cheers.) Then you have the finding that some of the respondents did express *bonâ fide* disapproval of crime. Is that a question of fact? If that is a question of fact, surely the other finding that the respondents did not denounce intimidation leading to

crime, even when they knew of its consequences, is also a matter of fact. (Hear, hear). You can make a distinction in the gravity of the findings, but you cannot make any distinction as to their authority. I will take one more. The finding of the Court that acquits Mr. Parnell of all connexion with the Invincible conspiracy is a finding of fact. But by what process of reason can you say that it is legitimate to accept a finding of that kind and reject a finding as to the co-operation and assistance which he has received from the Physical Force party? (Hear, hear.) They stand on the same footing. They have equal authority, and equal weight, and you must either reject all the findings or accept them all. (Hear, hear.)

#### THE PARNELLITES AND THE PHYSICAL FORCE PARTY.

There is a much more serious contention, if true. It is said that these findings relate to venial and trivial offences. Let us see what they are. There are three findings which stand together. The finding that the respondents invited and obtained the assistance and co-operation of the Physical Force party; the finding that there was no denunciation by Mr. Parnell of the action of the Physical Force party; and lastly, the finding that Mr. Davitt was in close and intimate association with the party of violence in America. Is that a trivial offence? (Cheers.) What was the Physical Force party? It was a party whose publicly avowed and professed object was to assassinate public men in this country and to lay our chief cities in ruins. (Hear, hear.) And yet my right hon. friend the member for Wolverhampton (Mr. H. H. Fowler) compared these transactions with the history of the agitations which led to the passing of the Reform Act and the repeal of the Corn Laws. I say there is no parallel in these transactions to any popular or patriotic movement in the history of the world. (Cheers.) There is no case in which men professing to carry on a constitutional agitation met their opponents in fair debate and at the same time were in close and intimate alliance with men who by their published newspapers declared that their object was to assassinate those same opponents and cause injury and ruin to the country-men of those so-called constitutional leaders. (Loud cheers.) Is no reparation due to us—(hear, hear)—who for months and years were followed by police even into our homes in order to protect us against the agents

of the friendly society of the hon. member for East Fife? (Laughter and cheers.) To compare action of this kind to the action of Bright and Cobden is simply an insult to the memory of those great men. (Hear, hear.)

#### CONNIVANCE AT CRIME.

Coming nearer home, I have to refer to the charges affecting the agitation in Ireland, and here I must quote one or two extracts. In the first place, there was the conversation between Mr. Parnell and Mr. Ives, the American reporter. That was before the larger number of outrages took place, and it was at a time when the Land League was in process of formation, and when therefore the principles upon which it was to be worked were being laid down. Mr. Parnell spoke very freely to this reporter on the subject, and at the conclusion of the description of the objects and methods of the League, Mr. Ives seems to have had some suspicion that all this would lead to violence, and he said to Mr. Parnell: "But do you not believe in the consequences which are visited upon tenants who do pay their rents?" Mr. Parnell replied: "Well it may be accepted as an axiom that you cannot effect a social revolution by dealing with it with kid gloves. Of course, if any farmers have burned the crops of their neighbours or destroyed their cattle because they have paid their rents those farmers are not only wrong, but they are fools, for they have to pay the cost. The person who has thus had his crop or stack destroyed is remunerated by the law, and his fellow-tenants have to bear the loss. But a certain amount of pressure from public opinion, which in such cases, is apt occasionally to manifest itself in unpleasant ways, must be brought to bear upon those who are weak and cowardly. Look at the strikes in England and America, and the penalties threatened towards traitors to the common cause." (Hear, hear.) Now I do not wish to exaggerate this language. It has a very disagreeable sound, and I quote it in order to show that Mr. Parnell at all events was perfectly well aware that the action he was taking and the methods he was devising, were likely to lead to certain persons being treated as "traitors" and in an "unpleasant way". (Hear, hear.) I might also give a quotation from the hon. member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor). That hon. member always speaks with great care in this House, but I note that he rarely

and direct the attention of the House to a speech made by the late Mr. Biggar at a banquet given to Mr. Parnell, and in which Mr. Biggar referred to Hartmann, but from which I will not quote unless the House desires me to do so. There is also a speech made by Boyton, to which reference has been made. Boyton told the people that they should shoot the landlords in the day-time, and that if the police came at night, and frightened their wives and daughters, they could blow out their brains if they had an old musket or a pistol. It was said the other day by an hon. member that it was extremely unfair to the hon. member for Cork to make him answerable for the wild language or statements of every person connected with the League or on the outskirts of the movement. (Hear, hear.) Certainly it is. But is it pretended that Boyton was a person of that kind? Boyton was one of the leading organisers of the League? He is thought of sufficient importance to have his speeches reported verbatim; and I ask, is it conceivable that a man like Boyton could make speeches of the sort I have referred to, speeches which were frequently repeated, and that attracted a great deal of attention at the time, without the leaders of the League being aware of the fact? (Cheers and cries of dissent from the Irish benches.) I say it is impossible to conceive that hon. members and the whole of the executive of the League were ignorant of the character of the speeches being made by Boyton and others, and if they were not ignorant of them, then they are proved to be guilty of connivance with crime. (Cheers.)

#### MR. DILLON AND THE FORGED LETTERS.

Now, Mr. Dillon made a speech, not at the time of the outrages, not in 1882, but in 1888, in cold blood, after the Home Rule Bill had been introduced, and after a better feeling—as it has been said—had sprung up between the two countries. He says:—

“I have been for nine years now engaged in this struggle, and if any man asks me what it was that won, so far as I could answer without hesitation, it was keeping the farms empty. If the landlord had found it possible during these nine years to let every evicted farm, you never would have had the Land Bill at all. Those who went before us tried good means, and they tried bad means too, and

there never was the slightest success until we hit upon the dodge of making it too hot for the man who took his neighbour's land."

Now I wish to call attention to that expression. Mr. Dillon said that he "had hit upon the dodge of making it too hot". My right hon. friends on this side of the House have complained that the charges of which hon. members opposite were acquitted were infamous and dishonouring charges, which, if proved, would have shown the hon. member for Cork to be a liar, a coward, a hypocrite, and a murderer. Why, what was the charge against the hon. member for Cork? What was the worst of the forged letters? It was a letter in which Mr. Parnell was charged with having urged that some one should "make it hot for old Forster". (Hear, hear.) If hon. members thought that the charge was infamous and dishonouring when it was brought against Mr. Parnell, what do they think when it is proved against Mr. Dillon? (Cheers.) Now what is the finding of the Judges upon this matter? They say:—

"No proof has been given and we do not believe that there was any intention on the part of the respondents or any of them to procure any murder or murder in general to be committed, and, further, we believe that even those of them who have used the most dangerous language did not intend to cause the perpetration of murder. But while we acquit the respondents of having directly or intentionally incited to murder, we find that the speeches made in which landgrabbers and other offenders against the League were denounced as traitors and as being as bad as informers—the urging young men to procure arms and the dissemination of the newspapers above referred to—had the effect of causing an excitable peasantry to carry out the laws of the Land League, even by assassination." (Hear, hear.) I do not think that this is a judgment which the House will think errs on the side of severity. But I contend that it is impossible to ignore such a finding if you are to undertake any comment at all upon the conclusions of the Report. (Hear, hear.) There are other findings of less importance on which I will not now dwell—there is for instance the dissemination of newspapers, the indiscriminate defence of prisoners, and the payment of persons injured in the commission of outrage. But these amount to condonation and connivance, and I say, therefore, that these serious charges, though less serious than those of which they have been

acquitted, which have been proved against hon. members opposite cannot be passed over without any notice being taken of them. (Hear, hear.)

#### NO EXCUSE FOR OUTRAGE.

But then there is another argument. It is said that these offences may be proved, but that there is palliation and extenuation for them. We are told that we ought to take into account the wrongs and misery of Ireland, and the valuable result of the agitation in the way of legislation. I am willing to admit the force of these arguments, but they are outside the present question. I say that the wrongs and misery of Ireland might have justified agitation—they did justify agitation—and even might have been an excuse for insurrection; but they cannot justify outrage, and it is this that makes the distinction between the agitation of hon. members from Ireland and that of Bright and Cobden. (Hear, hear.) In previous years you may have had outbursts of popular agitation, but never before did you have an organised system of intimidation leading to crime. I think we are bound to make this protest—(hear, hear)—and to say that assassination and outrage of the character described are instruments which even an injured people have no right to employ. Mr. Davitt has shown that his hands, at all events, are absolutely clean in this matter, and in his speeches and in his address to the Commissioners he has pointed out that these outrages were not only condemned by him, but that they were positively injurious to the agitation. With regard to the argument that we should take into account the result, I admit that the Land Bill could not have been passed without agitation, but I say that it did not need crime and outrage in order to pass the Land Bill or to back up the agitation. (Cheers.) What we complain of is crime and outrage, and not agitation. (Hear, hear.) Then it is said that all these things are ancient history and do not go beyond the charges which were made by Mr. Forster in this House, or even those made by the right hon. gentlemen the member for Mid Lothian and the member for Derby. That is true, perfectly true, and I believe that while the sensational calumny by which the charges of my right honourable friends have been supplemented has failed, their original charges have been fully and completely sustained. But when we made these charges

and asked the House to pass stringent Coercion Acts on the ground that these charges were true, we did not think that they were trivial and venial ; and if they were not then, what has occurred since that time to make them so now ? (Hear, hear.) We said then that crime and outrage were illegitimate weapons of agitation, and that incitement to intimidation, however innocent in intention, was wrong. Why should we not hold the same opinion now ; and if we are called upon to vote upon these findings, why should we not say so now ? (Hear, hear.) There is only this difference between then and now. At that time it might have been said that these grave charges had been put forward by political opponents—certainly by persons of different political convictions. Now they are made and proved on the authority of a judicial tribunal—(hear, hear)—and I say that it will be a supreme advantage of this Commission that in the future it will be impossible for the leaders of any agitation, situated as hon. members below the gangway, to ignore or to pretend to ignore the consequences of the action and language which have been conclusively proved and recorded against them. (Cheers.)

*BIRMINGHAM, April 10, 1890.*

## THE NEW POLITICAL MORALITY.

[On April 10, 1890, a Banquet was held in the Town Hall, Birmingham, to celebrate the opening of the Liberal Unionist Club. About 300 members of the Club attended. In proposing the toast of "Prosperity to the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Club" Mr. Chamberlain spoke as follows.]

It is quite right that a function of this kind should be performed with some ceremony and formality, for it marks a new chapter in our political history. It is not only a new club that you are founding to-night. You are emphasising our separation from the Gladstonian Liberals—(cheers)—and you are taking another step in the constitution of a third party in English politics. (Hear, hear.) The position, gentlemen, is not altogether one of our seeking. When four years ago we found ourselves compelled to separate from Mr. Gladstone in his extraordinary surrender to Mr. Parnell we hoped that the division was only a temporary one. We accepted with confidence the appeal to the nation, and we thought, when that appeal had been made, that our old friends and colleagues would come back to us, and that once more they would endeavour to work out on old Liberal lines the solution of the great Irish question. (Cheers.) We have been disappointed, not in the result of the election, but in the consequences which have followed. Defeat has only made these gentlemen more bitter, and from that time to the present day they have pursued us with a previously unknown virulence of expression and of action, and it has been their sole object to drive from public life those Liberals whose only fault has been that they were unable at the bidding of one imperious leader to desert the principles and to be false to the pledges of a lifetime. (Cheers.)



## GLADSTONIAN TACTICS.

Gentlemen, the tactics of our opponents are perfectly intelligible. Our consistency, our firmness, is a standing reproach to their vacillation and weakness. (Hear, hear.) If they could get rid of us they would have the ground to themselves; they would be able to claim all the advantage of the goodwill which would come to them as the sole representatives of the party of progress. But as long as we are here to contest the field with them they are not, they cannot be, the Liberal party. (Cheers.) They may be Gladstonian Liberals, or Parnellite Liberals, or Separatist Liberals at their choice, but they cannot claim the inheritance of that great party from whose principles they have so widely departed. Well, they build their hopes now upon the general election. (Laughter.) Undeterred by the failure of past predictions—they are confidently prophesying our extinction at that time. They are always giving us notice to quit, but they find it very difficult to carry out the eviction. (Laughter and cheers.) Forewarned is forearmed. We are perfectly alive to their amiable intentions, but we do not fear them—(hear, hear)—and I hold it to be our duty, as well as our interest, to maintain and to perfect the organisation of the party which will enable us to regard all their attacks with equanimity.

Now it is a curious and interesting coincidence that a few days ago Lord Rosebery, who is a distinguished leader of the Gladstonian party, was performing at Edinburgh a somewhat similar function to that in which I am engaged. He was opening a Scottish Liberal Club, which, however, appears to be intended to shelter both sections of the party, and the audience which Lord Rosebery addressed was a mixed audience, in which I am inclined to think that his political opponents predominated, and under the circumstances he had, as he said, to deal gently with the Amalekites—(laughter)—he had to make it pleasant all round, and accordingly he prophesied smooth things, and predicted the approaching reunion of the party, which he and his friends have done so much to divide and to destroy. (Hear, hear.) I make every allowance for the delicacy of his position, but I am not prepared to accept his prediction until I know what sacrifice, what concession, he and his friends are willing to make in order to secure this union which they declare to be so desirable.

## POLITICS DIVORCED FROM ETHICS.

Lord Rosebery said that his chief reason for believing in it—it was a most remarkable statement—was that Home Rule was a question of expediency and not of morality—(“Oh”)—and was a question of politics, not of ethics. Well, if this be so, surely we may invite Lord Rosebery—and his friends—to retrace their steps ; to put aside this question of mere expediency in order once more to join with us in dealing with those great questions in which morality and ethics are involved—(applause)—and about which we are all agreed. From Lord Rosebery’s standpoint that is not a large concession to ask for, and if he refuses it we shall then see clearly that he is willing to perpetuate these divisions in the Liberal party for a question which, according to him, is only a question of tactics and expediency.

But I want you to examine this statement a little more closely. I do not believe we are prepared to agree that Home Rule is a mere matter of expediency. (Hear, hear.) I do not think we are inclined to accept this new doctrine that politics can be divorced from ethics and expediency treated apart from morality. Lord Rosebery has told you that this is a ground for expecting a probable reunion. I say, on the contrary, that it is because the Gladstonian Liberals, not on the Irish question alone, but throughout the whole field of political controversy, acting on the inspiration, and following the example of their Irish allies, have divorced politics from ethics—(hear, hear)—that I believe reunion is still far distant. Where do you find in the whole past history of the Liberal party any parallel with the extraordinary series of manœuvres by which it has been sought to impose a great constitutional change upon the English people? Mr. Gladstone’s Home Rule policy was conceived in secrecy, was born in deceit, and it has been nurtured on evasion. (Cheers and laughter.) No one has been found, not even a personal friend or a colleague, to say that Mr. Gladstone gave him the slightest intimation of his change of front before the election of 1885—an election in which he asked for a majority in order that he might deal with the Irish question independently of the Irish vote. Just let me note, in passing, that nowadays we are told by the Gladstonian party that it is immoral and altogether ridiculous to attempt any legislation that has not the assent of the representatives of that section of the Irish people which constitutes the majority at

the present time. But in 1885 Mr. Gladstone appealed to the country to give him a majority in order that he might ignore this section. (Cheers.) The election of 1885 was fought under false pretences. (Cheers.) Have we any reason to hope that the next general election will be fought with greater candour and more openness? (Hear, hear.) We have tried, and his own adherents have tried, ever since 1885, to elicit from Mr. Gladstone some authentic exposition of his policy. They have asked him to put aside the veil of mystery in which he has enshrined his programme, and these efforts have been altogether fruitless. At the present moment there is no Gladstonian, from the highest to the lowest, who is able to answer even an elementary question as to the nature and the character of the Home Rule to which he has pledged himself. (Hear, hear.) But while there is no information at all on the principal point, candidates on the Gladstonian side are encouraged to appeal to every personal and petty interest, to stimulate every rising discontent, to express sympathy with the extremest theories, in order that thereby they may be able to court those who are dissatisfied, those who are discontented, those who are restless, and to focus their support on behalf of a Party whose chief claim it will be that it is always open to pressure. (Laughter.) This is the condition to which politics divorced from morality have reduced the Gladstonian party. (Hear, hear.)

#### THE PARNELL COMMISSION.

But let me give you another illustration. We have had occasion to see another example of the results of the new morality, which, unlike the ancient Liberalism that was founded on the Ten Commandments, is founded upon an entire ignorance of those important injunctions. (Laughter.) During the present session we have spent something like a fortnight in discussing the report of the judges of the Parnell Commission. I do not think that that time will have been wasted if we have been able to call public attention to the distinction which I am endeavouring to impress upon you. If you have read the debates upon the Parnell Commission, there is one point, I think, which must have forcibly impressed you, and that is, that although a good deal was said and a great deal more was insinuated as to the composition of the Commission and as to the supposed prepossessions of the judges, no one, no Gladstonian, and not even any Parnellite, has

attempted to dispute the general and substantial accuracy of the findings of the judges. (Hear, hear.) In all future discussion those findings, so far as they relate to matter of fact, may be taken for granted. They have not been disputed—they cannot be disputed—the only question which remains is, what conclusions you shall draw from them, what estimate you shall place upon those findings? Now, what were the findings of the judges? Briefly, they may be put in a single sentence. Whereas the respondents have been cleared of personal and direct complicity with crime, the organisation which the respondents promoted and founded was the chief cause of crime in Ireland—(cheers)—and was in close and intimate relationship with the associations in the United States of America which were created to promote assassination and outrage by dynamite—(hear, hear)—and further, it is found that the leaders of the Irish association incited to intimidation and refrained from denouncing it, although they knew that this intimidation led to crime, and even to the crime of murder. (Hear, hear.) Those are the facts. They have not been denied. They cannot be denied.

What was the attitude of the Gladstonian party towards those findings—towards a judicial decision which I believe has no parallel in our political history? Did they condemn with natural indignation the policy which led to these results? No, gentlemen, they devoted their eloquence and their sophistry to palliate and to defend it. Did they sympathise with the victims of this policy—with the men in humble circumstances who had been ruined or crippled for life, with the widows and the orphans who had been made desolate by these terrible offences? Not a bit of it. They reserved their sympathy for the authors of this policy. Did they even demand securities and guarantees for the future, that at least in the future there should be no repetition of such a policy? No; they appealed triumphantly to legislation, which they said had been extorted from an unwilling Parliament by means of this agitation. They appealed to it as an excuse and a justification for the methods by which this so-called constitutional agitation has been tarnished and disgraced. I say that in the speeches of the leaders of the Gladstonian party there will be found for all time a text-book for revolutionary crime. (Cheers.) If a political object can be alleged—if a political advantage can be shown—no one will in future lack encouragement or lack argument

for such incidents of the campaign as assassination and dynamite. You must keep clear of personal complicity with crime. That is still punishable by law ; that has not yet been justified, even by the Gladstonian Liberals. (Laughter and Hear, hear.) But if you do this you may pursue a course every step of which has been clearly traced out by the report of the judges, a course which leads to crime with fatal and unerring precision. You may sit in your studies with your hands on the throttle-valve of crime, turning it off and turning it on at your pleasure ; but if you are skilful enough to avoid legal responsibility, you may yet see yourselves described by Mr. Gladstone as the saviours of society—(laughter and continued cheers)—and you may have his followers extol you for your lofty patriotism and your unselfish devotion. In the course of this debate I heard Mr. Parnell compared to all the heroes of popular and patriotic agitation in the past—to Tell and to Garibaldi, and—heaven save the mark—to George Washington himself. (Laughter.) I thought that that comparison, at all events, was rather an unfortunate one, for history tells us that George Washington never told a lie—(laughter and cheers)—not even to mislead the House of Commons. But, gentlemen, this extravagant laudation only shows the confusion into which the Gladstonians have plunged since they gave up the old morality to adopt the new, since they divorced politics from ethics and adopted the principle that the end will sanctify the means. (Laughter.) Their decline and fall has been a very rapid one. The same men who now stand up to defend boycotting as exclusive dealing, who speak of the Irish League as though it were a trades union, and talk delicately of the Clan-na-Gael as a friendly society—(laughter)—these are the men who five years ago, when the charges which have now been proved before the judges were mere matters of suspicion and assertion, denounced the Parnellites from every platform in the United Kingdom, called clamorously for more and more stringent coercion, and ridiculed Home Rule as being altogether outside the sphere of practical politics. And now to what further depths these perverts may be yet converted my imagination refuses to conceive. I know that politics without morals are a very shabby substitute for the old Liberal principles ; and they must retrace their steps, they must give up this idea that expediency can be their highest guide before union is possible—I will say before

union is even desirable. I think I have given some reason for differing with Lord Rosebery, and for thinking that reunion at all events must be postponed for a considerable time.

#### THE OBJECTS OF THE UNIONIST ALLIANCE.

We have, as I have said, to perfect and complete our organisation. I think we can look back upon the past not altogether without satisfaction. In cordial and loyal alliance with our fellow Unionists of the Conservative party—(cheers)—we have defeated the policy of disintegration which threatened the existence of the empire ; and we have contributed at the same time to restore law and order in Ireland, and peace and prosperity to that distracted country. (Hear, hear.) Those were the main objects for which we separated from Mr. Gladstone. These remain, and will remain, our principal aims. We are taunted by our opponents with having sacrificed to these objects our distinctive Liberal opinions in regard to other questions. If the taunt were true it would be harmless, because a question which affects the national existence is always more urgent and more important than any party question. But the taunt is untrue, and I say that we can feel a just satisfaction in the certainty that with our influence and our support to back them, the Unionist Government have been able to give a fuller consideration to progressive measures than could have been expected from any party which was pledged to put them aside in order to carry out a great constitutional change. I believe that the continuance of the present Government in office and the continuance of the Unionist alliance is the best guarantee for the completion of that programme which a few years ago expressed the ambition of every true Liberal—(cheers)—but which was ruthlessly cast aside in order to purchase the support of Mr. Parnell.

#### FREE EDUCATION.

I will take as one illustration, and in confirmation of my belief, the most important item of this programme, which has up to the present time remained undealt with, I mean the question of free education. Free education is essentially a Birmingham question. (Hear, hear.) Free education was first raised into practical politics by Mr. Dixon—(cheers)—and by the Education League in 1870, and since then free education has remained one of the prime

objects of every educationist and of every true Radical. I must say that when the Liberal Government were in power that question had very scant support from the official chiefs, and as you know, it had no place at all in the authorised programme. But now—now that it has been taken up by a Conservative Government—there is no restraining the impatience of these gentlemen. (Laughter.) They are ready to turn out the Government at once because it will not do in twenty-four hours what, when they had the opportunity, they refused to do at all. (Hear, hear.) Well, I am a practical man, and as one of those with whom this question of free education has been, I might almost say, the main object of my public and political life, I prefer to trust to the promise of the Government in power rather than to the new-fledged enthusiasm of an Opposition which has shown itself perfectly ready to play with this question in order to catch votes, but which would undoubtedly put it aside if it came into office and had to deal with its Irish programme. (Cheers.) And I am confirmed in my preference when I think of the spirit in which the Opposition have approached the question. They do not come to it as educationists like Mr. Dixon, they come to it as partisans. (Hear, hear.) They do not love free education for its own sake, but they adopt it because they believe that by its means they can destroy or injure the voluntary schools. Macaulay said that the Puritans hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators; and in the same way I would say that the Gladstonians love free education, not because it is good for the children, but because they think it would be bad for the Church. My views on the subject of State establishments are pretty well known. I think that they are injurious to religion, and that they are politically indefensible; but I am prepared to fight the question of the liberation of the Church from State control—that is to say, of a free Church upon its merits. I do not want to carry it by a side wind, and, above all, I do not want to mix up with it this great social and educational question of free schools. I do not want to complicate it and to prejudice it by mixing it up with another question with which it has no direct connection whatsoever. I have said that the first object of the Gladstonians is to injure the voluntary schools. They refuse to agree to free education—that is to say, to the grant from the State which would

be necessary in order to do away with fees—unless the grant is accompanied in every case by local management. Now will you examine the effect of that in practice? Let us see how it would affect us in Birmingham. At the present time there are, under the School Board of Birmingham, schools which provide accommodation for 41,000 children, and the cost of this accommodation and of the education which is given to the children—the cost to the rates alone, because I am not dealing with the cost to the taxes—the cost to the rates alone is £72,000 a year. We have in addition in the voluntary schools places for 26,000 children, which, of course, under our existing system cost the rates nothing at all. Now, the proposal of the Gladstonians is that the Board schools should be made free, but that the voluntary schools shall either remain as fee-collecting schools, or if they want to be free schools they should come under public management. In every case the result would be the same. If they remain fee-collecting schools the children of course would be withdrawn from them, and the Board would have to provide accommodation for the children of parents who demanded free education. If, on the contrary, they came under public management, the object for which they had been established would disappear, the managers of those schools would be unable to collect subscriptions, and the schools must be closed. In every case the same result must obtain; the Board would have to provide immediately places for 26,000 additional children, and if the cost were in the same proportion as the cost of the existing accommodation, it would involve the addition to your rates of £45,000, or a rate of between 6*d.* and 7*d.* in the pound. That is the price that you would have to pay for the public management of all your schools. I ask myself, would the ratepayers think that the game was worth the candle? (“No.”) Would they be willing, for this theoretical advantage—for after all it is not very much more than that—would they be willing, in order to have a theoretically perfect system, to increase their rates by 7*d.* in the pound? And remember, that what would happen in Birmingham would happen throughout the country, with this difference—that in many parts of the country the cost would be much greater, because the proportion of accommodation provided by the Board is much less in the country districts than it is in Birmingham. In my opinion, the result of this proposal would be a general reaction against



national education which would throw us back for many years. (Hear, hear.)

### THE NEW CONCORDAT.

But this is not the worst of it ; that is not the whole of the proposal with which we have to deal. I have said that the Gladstonians come to this question as partisans. By the new concordat which was explained in the House of Commons the other night, it was proposed that the Roman Catholic schools—Roman Catholic support being necessary to the party—it was proposed that the Roman Catholic schools should be exempt from this obligation—that is to say, that the schools which of all others are most sectarian should receive additional grants, should become free schools, and have all these advantages, and that they should be exempt from the public control which was to be imposed at the same time upon the schools of the Church of England, and upon the schools of the Protestant dissenting sects. I say a more monstrous proposition—(cheers)—was never made in the House of Commons, and it is a crowning illustration of the politics without morality—(cheers)—which thinks no price too high to pay for eighty-six Irish votes. (Hear, hear.) Well, gentlemen, contrast with that the proposal of the Government.

The proposal of the Government with regard to the education question is to deal with it on its merits, to leave untouched this question of the relative position of the voluntary and the Board schools. Whenever the country is desirous of putting an end to the voluntary system, whenever it is willing to pay the price for it, it can do it almost by a stroke of the pen—by withdrawing the Government grants. But until that time comes, and in the meanwhile let us have free education—let us have it because it is just to the parents, and will give a great impetus to the national instruction. The Government propose to make a grant which shall be a substitute from the resources of the nation for the fees, which are now a tax upon the parents, and which are a tax unequal in its incidence and its severity. We say national education is a matter of national interest, and it is fair and right that the nation should pay for it, and not that it should be a charge upon the individual. (Cheers.) Let the Government do this, and then we shall have conferred upon the

working classes of this country the greatest boon they have ever received since the repeal of the corn laws. (Cheers.)

### THE LAND PURCHASE BILL.

Gentlemen, I have occupied a great deal of your time, but I must not sit down until I have referred briefly to a subject which must be in all your minds, and which will no doubt occupy a large part of the session in which we are engaged—I refer, of course, to the Irish Land Bill—(cheers)—which has just been introduced by Mr. Balfour. (Cheers.) I think that the manner in which this Bill has been received by the Opposition is, to say the least of it, very instructive. The principle of the Bill is the extension of peasant proprietary in Ireland. Now, that is a principle which every leading statesman, and above all, which every leading Gladstonian has already accepted. You have Mr. Parnell, who tells you that it is impossible to deal with the question of Home Rule by constitutional means until you have first dealt with the Land Bill. You have Mr. Morley, who has said that nothing would induce him to complicate the question of Home Rule by throwing upon a Home Rule parliament this difficult and complicated matter. You have Lord Spencer, who has said that he would not consent to Home Rule unless it were preceded by some equitable settlement of the land question which would relieve the minority in Ireland of the possibility of oppression and confiscation. And you have, lastly, Mr. Gladstone, who has told you that this was a matter of obligation, and honour, and necessity. Under these circumstances, is it possible to find a question which in the nature of things is more removed from party politics? (Hear, hear.) There is a unanimous assent as to the desirability of the principle. What would be the course of a patriotic Opposition under such circumstances? Surely, they would welcome the introduction of the Bill; surely, they would do all in their power to hasten its second reading; and then, in the Committee stage, they would loyally assist the Government to improve it, to amend it, to make it as perfect as possible, and to give it every chance of successful application. I am afraid that that is not the course that we must expect from the Gladstonians. (A voice: “Hardly”.) The Gladstonian leaders have very little initiative left to them—(laughter)—and whatever they may think on the

subject, these nominal leaders will have to follow those who set them in motion. We learn from the speeches of those who call themselves the rank-and-file, we know from the organs of the Gladstonian party, that the policy of expediency demands that this Bill, although it concedes the principle for which they have been contending, must be denounced *ab initio*, because it is conceded by the Government, must be obstructed in its procedure through the House, and must be prevented, if possible, from becoming law. We know the tactics that will be pursued. (Hear, hear.) I believe that the Unionist party is strong enough to defeat them—(cheers)—and although we are ready to profit by all honest criticism, we are perfectly prepared to defeat factious obstruction. (Hear, hear.) I have told you that the principle of the Bill has been universally accepted. Yes, but I can say more than that. I can say that the main novelty in the method of the Bill has also been accepted. (Hear, hear.) The main novelty of the Bill is the mortgaging of contributions from the national exchequer to local purposes as a security for the advances which are to be made under the Bill, and that proposal has also been generally accepted. That was the main feature of the scheme which was submitted to the Round Table Conference, at which you will remember Sir William Harcourt has told us that we were in substantial agreement.

#### MR. PARNELL AND LAND PURCHASE.

But I have even a better authority than Sir William Harcourt. I can appeal to the dictator of the Gladstonian party. I can appeal to Mr. Parnell himself. (Laughter.) We are told that no legislation is worthy a moment's consideration which has not the sanction of Mr. Parnell. We are told that this Bill will not be accepted by the leaders of the Irish people, and that, as it will be imposed upon them, the Irish people will have a right to repudiate their subsequent obligations. But are you sure, are these gentlemen sure, that Mr. Parnell, who is the leader of the Irish people, will oppose this Bill, or that he will deny the assent which he has previously given to its main provisions. Here is an extract to which I attach the greatest importance, and which I am sure, you will be glad to have brought to your attention, from a speech which was delivered by Mr. Parnell in the House of Commons on January 21, 1886. He said this: "I

shall be glad if some proposition can be made for dealing with the land difficulty in Ireland, because I look upon it as the real difficulty in that country, which overshadows every other. Some scheme of purchase might be devised on some such lines as those which are understood to have been put forward by the eminent statistician, Mr. Giffen, in a recent letter which has attracted a good deal of attention." That was a letter written by Mr. Giffen to the *Economist*, in which he proposed the application of the local contribution in the way which is carried out under this Bill. (Hear, hear.) "I do not pledge myself," says Mr. Parnell, "to the details, but as to the general idea contained in that letter, it is one under which the bulk of the land in the occupation of agricultural tenants might be purchased." And then he goes on to say: "The question demands the careful attention of the House and the Government, and I believe all those who are not influenced by party motives in Ireland are of opinion that there should be some fair settlement; and if such fair settlement were arrived at and agreed upon and if it were really a fair one, I am convinced that the payments would be made by the Irish tenants to the last penny". (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, we have had a bitter experience of the past statements of Gladstonian and Parnellite leaders. It is possible that neither Mr. Gladstone nor Mr. Parnell may feel himself bound by these admissions; but, in any case, I think in the debate which is coming on they will be considerably hampered by their previous assurances.

#### LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL'S CRITICISMS.

Meanwhile, it is a singular fact that the most serious criticism of the Bill has proceeded from a Conservative source. (Cheers.) I am not going to dispute the ability of Lord Randolph Churchill's criticisms, and certainly I am not going to impugn the sincerity of his motives; but I think his fears are altogether exaggerated—(hear, hear)—and I do not believe that it is humanly possible that there can ever be such an unfavourable combination of circumstances as he has had to invent in order to found upon it his opposition to this Bill. (Cheers.) I admit, however, that when we are dealing with Irish tenants—when we are dealing with a class of the population which has been corrupted for years by the new morality of the Plan of

Campaign and the no-rent manifesto—I admit that you must be prepared even for the most extreme development of the policy of expediency. But even then, gentlemen, we have the remedy in our own hands. It is altogether a mistake to say that this Bill is founded upon the use of British credit. It is founded upon Irish resources, and the only sense in which you have recourse to British credit is the sense in which you speak of having recourse to the credit of a bank when you draw upon it against a deposit which you have already placed in its hands. Great Britain will not advance a single penny beyond the value of the contributions which are made from the British exchequer towards local purposes in Ireland, and under those circumstances you will always have it in your power to secure the repayment of the advances that you have made. I do not agree at all with Lord Randolph Churchill when he says that no Government will ever be able to adopt so extreme a remedy. Just think for a moment how extreme the case will be, by the hypothesis which he supposes. You have, according to his supposition, to imagine that the tenants in Ireland, who have all had a fair rent fixed for them by a judicial tribunal, come forward to ask the assistance of the British Government in order that they may make a new arrangement, whereby, by the payment of one-third less than their fair rent for a limited period of forty-nine years, they may enter upon an entire and an absolute possession of their holdings. You have to suppose that people who have asked for and have received this enormous advantage are going to combine to repudiate the payment of their debt, although by so doing they will risk not merely any instalment they have paid, but also the tenant-right which is already their possession. You have also to suppose that in this combination they will have the sympathy of the whole of Ireland. I say that in such a case the British taxpayer will have no scruple at all, and that he ought to have no scruple in realising his security, and stopping the local contributions—(cheers)—until the last penny is paid.

#### A WEAK SPOT IN THE LAND BILL.

But, gentlemen, although I do not fear repudiation—although I believe that by this Bill it is put beyond a possible shadow of doubt—yet I do think that Lord Randolph Churchill has put his finger

upon one weak spot in the Bill when he points out that under it the tenants of Ireland will be brought into direct relationship with the English Government, which may become for forty-nine years the landlord of a large part of Ireland. I think that that is an arrangement which is calculated to produce friction and discontent and possible disturbance. But if that be a fault, as I admit in my opinion it is, it is one which is easily repaired. The Government have pledged themselves to bring in a scheme of local government for Ireland. I hope that they will produce it before the Land Bill leaves the House of Commons, and I hope it is in their mind, and that in the course of discussion they will make it clear that when these new local authorities, these new County Boards, are established in Ireland, they will be substituted for the central authority in dealing with the land; that they will be consulted in the preliminary negotiations, that they will be given a substantial interest in the honest payment of rent, and that there will be thrown upon them the full responsibility for the debts which will be incurred. When this is done, we shall have done all that can be accomplished by legislation, in order to promote what has been the chief object of Irish reformers for many years—a peasant proprietary in Ireland, and, at the same time, to promote a public opinion in favour of the honest fulfilment of just and reasonable obligations. (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, I must not detain you any longer. I think, however, that even in the brief survey which I have taken of the field of politics that you will have been impressed with the magnitude and the importance of the work which is still left for us to do. We, as Liberal Unionists, are associated to carry out this work on the old Liberal lines. We recognise as our leaders in the past Russell, and Cobden, and Mill, and Bright. (Prolonged cheering.) It never entered into their minds that politics could be divorced from morality; and we, their followers, I am sure, share their conviction, that no nation can be truly great, and no people can be happy, whose statesmen found themselves upon such an ignoble conception of public duty. (Loud cheers.)

*OXFORD, May 7, 1890.*

## A PLEA FOR A NON-PARTY SETTLEMENT OF THE IRISH LAND QUESTION.

[On May 7, 1890, Mr. Chamberlain addressed a meeting held in the Corn Exchange, Oxford, under the auspices of the University Unionist League. The Warden of Merton presided. Mr. Chamberlain, who was most enthusiastically received, said :—]

I THINK it no mean privilege to be able on this occasion to address so many of those who have not at present perhaps taken any prominent part in our political controversies, but who may yet have an important influence in the future in determining the destinies of our country—(cheers)—and whom, therefore, it is important, if possible, to influence. (Cheers.)

### IMPORTANCE OF THE PRESENT CRISIS.

I think you will agree with me that at the present time the interest of politics is very great. I will say that never since the Revolution of 1688, and since the questions that arose out of that revolution, have the electors and the constituencies of this country been brought face to face with questions of such far-reaching and tremendous importance. (Cheers.) We are not discussing now, as our predecessors have done on many occasions, a mere amendment of the law, however important. We are not discussing a vast and comprehensive scheme of reform which would carry somewhat further principles which have already been partially applied. But we are called upon to consider an abrupt and an entire reversal of a policy which has hitherto been supported by all the greatest and the ablest of our statesmen, and which, up to the last few years, has been accepted by politicians of all parties as the only policy which would be consistent with the security of the empire. (Loud cheers.) Now, I say, dealing with a question like that, and speaking to such an audience as this, I have a right to ask that you should approach this matter in a judicial and in a befitting spirit. (Hear, hear.) I say, in the first place, that you will come to it, I hope, with a supreme sense

of the duty which lies upon you to maintain the honour and the interests of your country. You are citizens born free in the greatest empire that the world has ever known. (Cheers.) You will do nothing lightly or rashly to weaken the foundations of that empire. (Hear, hear.) And, in the second place, I think I may say that you will come to the consideration of this great question without the personal bitterness and prejudice which party feeling and party interests have imported into the matter in the case of older and more hardened politicians. (Cheers.) Now, I will make one preliminary observation, to which I expect a general assent. The establishment of a separate Parliament in Ireland may be a good or a bad thing, but at any rate it is attended with great risk. (Cheers.) I want to carry everybody with me as far as I can and as long as I can—(laughter and cheers)—and, therefore, I will quote my authority. Mr. John Morley—(cheers and hisses)—who is one of the oldest and one of the most honest adherents of Home Rule—(cheers)—Mr. Morley was writing in the *Nineteenth Century* a few years ago, and he said, in reference to this question, that the creation of a separate Parliament in Ireland on the Colonial model would be attended with “visible risk”; and he went on to say that English statesmen would think twice or thrice before they ran this risk—the risk, as he put it, of a “squalid and reduced version of the Thirty Years’ War”. (Laughter and cheers.) I suppose I am right in assuming that Mr. Morley and those who think with him are now prepared to accept this risk as at least the less of two evils. They think it would be better to run the chance of a “squalid and reduced version of the Thirty Years’ War” than to continue the irritating attempt to govern Ireland against the will of the majority of its representatives. I think they are wrong. (Cheers.) But for the moment I only refer to this in order to draw this conclusion, to which I also ask general assent. If there is this risk, this tremendous risk, affecting our national existence and the tranquillity of the country, the risk of a Thirty Year’s War, at least we ought to be quite certain before we plunge into the unknown, before we take this irrevocable and, it may be, this fatal step, that there is no reasonable alternative which we can put in its place. (Cheers.)

#### THE UNIONIST PROGRAMME.

At the general election the Unionist party in both its branches



pledged themselves to find this alternative, and the time has come for them to redeem their promises. We have entered upon a new phase of the Irish question during the present Session of Parliament. (Cheers.) By common consent the country is now more tranquil, more prosperous, than it has been for many years. (Cheers.) I think the Unionist Government may take some credit for having produced that result—(cheers)—but, at anyrate, it is now set free to develop the other part of its programme, and to find out and to remedy the underlying causes of Irish discontent. (Cheers.) Hitherto I am sure we have all agreed—I think I shall carry agreement somewhat further; I think we shall agree that the underlying causes, the social and economic causes, of Irish discontent are well known; and we shall agree also as to the general character of the remedies which have to be applied. I will test that in what I think will be a satisfactory way. Suppose we had an Irish Parliament to-day on College Green. What would be the first duty and the first task of the Irish legislative authority? I think myself that its first business would be to pass a strong Coercion Bill for Ulster—(laughter and cheers)—and to invite the assistance of the British forces in order to restore order in that part of her Majesty's dominions. (Laughter and cheers.) But let us suppose that that necessary and first duty of every civilised Government has been accomplished and that Mr. Parnell (hisses and cheers), as Prime Minister—(laughter)—of the new Irish Government, were able at the opening of the session to assure the Parliament that his Government had successfully vindicated law and order—(laughter)—and that all the Ulster representatives were safely lodged in gaol. (Laughter and cheers.) Then in that happy condition of affairs what would be the constructive legislation, what would be the measures to which he would call the attention of his colleagues? Everybody knows—I do not suppose there will be any difference of opinion about it—that the first measures would be the extension of peasant proprietorship, the relief of congested districts, and the establishment of a system of local government for Ireland. (Cheers.) But that is precisely the programme of the brutal Balfour! (Continued cheering.) That is the programme of the coercion Government! (Cheers.) I think, under these circumstances, we may claim for it an impartial and favourable consideration. (Cheers.) Now, there is another point to which I think I shall have your assent,

namely, that this coercion Government, by its position and by the circumstances in which it is placed, is the best authority for dealing with these subjects. (Cheers.) Again I will quote an opponent. What does Mr. Gladstone say? (Cheers and hisses.) Do not you think, gentlemen, that your opinions for and against distinguished politicians might be taken as read? (Laughter.) Mr. Gladstone has told us, with reference to Irish land, that it is an obligation of honour on the Imperial Parliament, and that it would be a most unwise, and I think he has said cowardly, thing to devolve this great and complicated question upon an Irish Parliament at the outset of its career, when it would be certain to provoke irritation and even violent passion in the clash of conflicting interests. (Cheers.) But there is another and still more practical reason why the Imperial Parliament is the best authority for dealing with these subjects. Ireland is a poor country; and if Ireland were started on its own resources, and if it had to pay, as it would have to pay, a heavy sum to England as its share of debt and its share of military and naval expenses, I think he would be a very sanguine patriot indeed who imagined under these circumstances that Ireland would be able to borrow money at less than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  or 4 per cent. But if Ireland had to pay this rate of interest, any great scheme of expropriation would become impossible because it would be impossible for the Irish Government to offer the advantages to the Irish tenant which are offered under the Bill which has been proposed by Mr. Balfour. (Cheers.)

#### A NON-PARTY SETTLEMENT.

Now, gentlemen, we have got on most harmoniously up to the present time. (Laughter and cheers.) The object which we are to keep in view is admittedly the same whichever party is in power. The methods and general principles which must be applied in securing this object are also admitted. The Imperial Parliament is the best authority for dealing with these subjects. Under these circumstances is not the country entitled to demand of its representatives that at all events for a short space of time they should put aside their perpetual bickerings—(cheers)—that they should put aside their perpetual struggles for place and power—(cheers)—that they should have regard to national interests, and national interests alone, and should seize this great opportunity, which

may never recur, and combine in order to make a national settlement, at all events, of this branch of the Irish question? (Cheers.) This is not a new idea of mine. It is not the first time I have made a similar appeal upon the same subject since I have been able to devote any attention to this great Irish question. I have been convinced—and my experience has confirmed my original impression—that no settlement can be final, whether upon the lines of Home Rule, or upon the lines of the Unionist policy, which a casual majority has rammed down the throats of an unwilling and unconverted minority. (Cheers.) We have recognised, fortunately for the nation, that our party system, if applied to the government of a great dependency like India, would be altogether inapplicable. (Hear, hear.) We have recognised that it would be fatal if it were applied to our relations with our colonial empire. I believe the time will come—I earnestly hope it may come soon—when we shall feel that our party system is equally incompetent to deal with the difficulties which have arisen in connexion with our relations to Ireland. (Cheers.) We are threatened with an irreconcilable hostility to the Irish Land Purchase Bill—that is to say, to a Bill which has a national object, which everybody in the nation admits to be desirable, and which attempts to carry out that object by methods upon which, as I have already said, there is also a general agreement. And yet, because of our party system, we shall have a minority in the House of Commons, which is absolutely unable to defeat the Government on a fair issue or by reason and argument, exhausting the unlimited resources of party obstruction in order to wear out that Government, in order to postpone the settlement of a question which everybody admits ought to have been settled long ago, and in order to prolong a state of confusion which is injurious to the best interests of the United Kingdom—(hear, hear)—and if they succeed, if the minority succeed in this ignoble enterprise, if as a result they come into power in their turn, then they also will be the victims of similar tactics, and they will reap the fruits of the example which they themselves have set. (Cheers.) This is an important question which from time to time the people of England are called upon to consider.

#### OUR PARTY SYSTEM.

Our party system is a necessary, and in some cases an admirable institution. (Hear, hear.) It secures an exhaustive criticism, and

examination into all new measures. It affords a stimulus, and even a healthy stimulus, to individual ambition, and to the ingenuity of rival politicians. But when great national interests are at stake, when the safety of the commonwealth is involved, this system breaks down. (Hear, hear.) Then we have to ask ourselves in the words of the Duke of Wellington, how is the Queen's government to be carried on? (Cheers.) You know what is the theory of our constitution. The theory of our constitution is that a majority, elected by the constituencies, is entitled to rule so long as it remains a majority, and that it is entitled to develop its policy. Yes, that is the theory, but in practice it is thrown to the winds; and you have a minority relying upon its power of obstruction to render every Government in turn entirely unable to carry on the government of the Queen. (Hear.)

#### THE PROSPECTS OF THE LAND PURCHASE BILL.

Now, let us apply this to the case of the Land Bill—the great alternative to Home Rule—the Unionist policy which is now on trial before the country. We have already exhausted the best part of a fortnight over the second reading of the Bill, owing to the pressure of financial and other business. It is hardly possible that we shall proceed to the next stage till after Whitsuntide. Then if the instructions upon the Bill are fully debated, another fortnight at least may possibly be occupied; and, if the Government take every day from that moment till the beginning of September, they will have just 55 sittings at their disposal. From these 55 sittings you must deduct all the time that will be required to complete Supply, of which there are over 100 votes to be taken. You must deduct the time which is required for other important Bills of the Government, and you must deduct the time which will be abstracted by the ingenuity of the Opposition in moving motions of adjournment. I have made the best estimate in my power, and I do not believe under these circumstances that the Government can count upon more than from 30—or, at most, 35—sittings for all the remaining stages of this great, important and complicated Bill. That is not all. During the whole time that this Bill is under discussion it will be necessary for the Government, and for the supporters of the Government, to be in unrelaxing, unremitting attendance. If they

fail on any occasion they will be liable to see their Government submitted to a damaging, and it may even be a fatal, defeat. The Opposition can take their leisure; they can go away at intervals. All they have to do is to be ready to go back, perhaps unexpectedly, by arrangement—(laughter)—at particular points and at particular times, when they may hope to put the Government in a minority. And so, as I have said, while they have comparative enjoyment of life—(laughter)—life is not worth living to the Government and to its supporters, who are condemned to sit on their seats and listen to an unintermittent flow of dribble and repetition—(laughter and cheers)—hour after hour, night after night, and week after week. The strain is too great for human faculties and human endurance, and it is upon this that, under our party system, the Opposition count. When they cannot defeat the Government by fair means they are quite ready to wear it out by persistent obstruction. (Hear, hear.) I do not think there is any wisdom in failing to appreciate the prospect which we have before us, and as a conclusion from what I have been telling you, I say that I do not believe that the Government can carry this Bill during the present Session unless either it drops a large and important part of the measure, and so lightens the ship by throwing valuable cargo overboard, or unless it uses the closure as it has never been used before, and carries the rest of the Bill after a certain time has been passed in discussion without amendment or further debate. (Cheers.) Now, both these contingencies would be a national calamity. It would be most regrettable and deplorable that the Government should drop, for instance, those provisions in this Bill which deal with the congested districts in Ireland, and which for the first time bring relief where relief is most necessary and best deserved. (Hear, hear.) On the other hand, it would be a misfortune that the Government should be forced to use the closure, as I have said they might be, because, in the first place, they would lose the advantage of honest criticism upon a measure which confessedly, by the nature of the case, must be more or less imperfect, and in the construction of which it is most desirable to have recourse to local experience and local knowledge, and also because to use the closure in this way would be of the worst possible augury for the success of a Bill which is intended to be, and which is, the greatest boon that England has ever offered to Ireland. (Cheers.) I desire to put before you—I

desire, as far as my voice will extend, to put before the country these difficulties which the Government have to confront in the present condition of our party life. But let us look at the other side. Let us look at the question from the standpoint of the Opposition. I remember reading in the writings of a witty Frenchman a description of a mythical animal, which he called the "Catoblépas," and which was so profoundly stupid that it devoured its own toes without being aware of it. (Laughter.) Well, that is just the position of the Opposition at the present moment—(cheers)—and when they in turn want to make progress they will find that they have destroyed their only means of locomotion. (Laughter.) Do they think they can dispose of this Irish land question by defeating the Government? No; it would remain to plague and perplex their successors, whoever they may be, and these men would find themselves hampered by the criticisms and the objections they have taken to the only proposals, I venture to say, which will ever successfully deal with this subject, and at the same time they would find that they had justified and encouraged an obstruction which it is hardly in human nature to be supposed would not be applied to them as they have so relentlessly applied it to others. (Hear.) I ask you, what is the outlet from this deadlock which we are approaching? Would it not be wiser in the interests of both parties to come to some arrangement—to see whether it be not possible by some compromise to take this question out of the sphere of party controversy, and to treat it as a question in which the whole nation without regard to party alike are interested? (Cheers.) We Unionists believe that if the land question in Ireland were settled, the Home Rule question would not be dangerous. (Hear, hear.) We believe that we could then discuss Home Rule upon its merits, and without the assistance which it derives from its association with the land agitation. On the other hand, the Separatist party—the Home Rule party—believe that the land question must be settled as a preliminary to the discussion of Home Rule, and that the demand for Home Rule would be emphasised after the land question had been settled. Then I say we are all agreed, and if both parties are sincere in the position which they have publicly taken up, both parties ought to desire to clear this question at least out of the way in order that we may go to the consideration of the other issue, that greater issue, which really divides us. (Cheers.)

### A SUGGESTION.

Now, suppose, if I may make a suggestion, that the leaders of parties—Lord Salisbury—(loud cheers)—as the head of the Unionist party and Mr. Gladstone—(cheers and hisses)—as the head of the Home Rule party—suppose those leaders were to come together and to confer upon the situation animated by patriotic motives and with the earnest desire to limit as far as possible the area of controversy. It would not be the first time that they have met for a similar purpose. (Hear, hear.) You will recollect that when the franchise question became acute, and when it threatened to arouse almost revolutionary passions, these distinguished statesmen were brought together, and that the result was a mutual compromise, which involved no loss of dignity, no sacrifice of any principle. The whole question was settled in a few weeks to the entire satisfaction and to the great advantage of the nation. (Cheers.) I believe that on this question of Irish land and Irish local government there is already so much agreement that a similar result might be brought about by similar means. (Cheers.) I have said that we are in general agreement as to the nature of the proposals which have been made. Everybody is agreed that it is necessary to insure a large extension of peasant proprietorship in Ireland; everybody is agreed that this operation cannot be carried out without the intervention of the State. (Hear, hear.) Something has been said as to the securities offered by this Bill. I think that the debate on the second reading showed conclusively that no criticism can be successful which is founded on opposition to the securities in the Bill. (Cheers.) The proposal made really has not been seriously attacked. (Cheers.) We have to guard the British Exchequer against risk. How have we done it? I think the proposal of the Bill was most admirably illustrated by Mr. Balfour when he said that under it the British Treasury would be in the position of a landlord who had been accustomed to pay away the whole amount of his rents in charitable subscriptions to the locality. If, then, the rents, or any portion of them, were withheld, what the landlord would have to do would be to withhold an equal proportion of his contributions, and his position would remain exactly the same. He could not possibly be injured or suffer to the extent of even one penny by repudiation, or by dishonesty, even if it

were carried to the utmost possible extent. The criticism upon this part of the Bill was really half-hearted, and I venture to say that if these proposals had been made by Mr. Gladstone, every Gladstonian and every Home Ruler would have declared that they constituted a masterpiece of financial statesmanship and ingenuity. (Cheers.)

#### THE LAND BILL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

But there was a much more serious objection taken, one which I think it is more difficult to answer, and I will endeavour to make clear its nature to you. The security which we take for the advance of money for the transfer of Irish land is the contribution now made by the Exchequer towards local purposes in Ireland. That contribution may be considered as the revenue and the property of the local authorities and of their constituencies. We are going to pledge the security, and we are going to mortgage the contribution, and we are not going to consult the authorities concerned, either those that now exist, or those that are to be created, and we are not going to give them any voice whatever in the disposition of the money which their security is to provide for us. Of course, the circumstances in Ireland are exceptional, and you would admit—I am sure every fair-minded man would admit—that if a proposal of that kind were made either as to England or Scotland, it would be most stoutly resisted. (Hear, hear.) I made in reference to this a suggestion in the House of Commons the other night, which I am sorry to say was not then accepted by the Government. I am going to return to it now, because I think that you will find the crux of the question is here, because it is most important that this matter should be fully considered, and because I had not the opportunity in the House of Commons to explain as fully as I wished the suggestion which I intended to make. But before I come to it, let me say, by way of preface, that I am not making this suggestion as hostile to the Bill. (Cheers.) I am not a candid friend “willing to wound and yet afraid to strike”. (Cheers.) I believe this Bill as it stands without any amendment to be the very best proposal which has ever yet been made for the settlement of the Irish difficulty. (Cheers.) I am not going to do anything which can by any possibility embarrass the Government—(cheers)—in their efforts to pass this Bill, which can



prevent its passing, or which can delay its operation. (Cheers.) I noticed a statement that some member of the Gladstonian party intends to move an instruction to the Committee that they shall have power to introduce a scheme of local government into the framework of this Bill. I will give no support whatever to any proposition of the kind. (Cheers.) I do not know—it would be presumptuous in me to assume to know—what can be the motive of such an instruction as that; but the effect of it cannot be concealed from any sensible person. The effect of it would be to destroy the Bill. (Hear, hear.) No Government in the world confronted by a hostile Opposition can carry in the same Session of Parliament, especially not in a portion of the Session of Parliament, two such great and complicated measures as Local Government and Land Purchase. (Cheers.) The two things of necessity must occupy separate Sessions. One must precede the other, and to endeavour to run them together would be fatal to both. (Cheers.) But my suggestion was of a different kind. All I urged on the Government was that they should give us the assurance, and, if necessary, insert a clause in the Bill as it stands to provide that when county councils are established in Ireland then those county councils should have important functions and privileges in regard to the administration of land purchase. The Government, remember, are pledged by the Queen's Speech to introduce a Local Government Bill for Ireland during the present Parliament. (Cheers.) They will not be able to pass it during the present Session, but it must be—short of some absolutely unforeseen accident—it must be the first business of the next Session. (Cheers.) And it is an open secret that this Bill will be founded upon the establishment in Ireland of county councils similar to those which have been already created in Scotland and in England. (Cheers.) My proposal, therefore, is that, when these councils are established next year, they should have the following duties and functions. When a landlord and his tenants agree for the sale and purchase of an estate I propose that they should apply for the approval of the county council. If that approval is granted then the matter will go, as in the Bill, to the Land Commission, who will examine into the security and conditions of the purchase; and if they are satisfied the money will be advanced. (Cheers.) The county council should collect the rents and the county council should pay over to the Land Commissioners the portion of

the rents which is required for interest and repayment ; and it should retain the balance for its own profit, to be applied to local purposes. (Cheers.) If there is any deficiency in the payment of rent the county council will have to make it good, and if it does not make it good, then the Government will be entitled to deduct the necessary amount from the contribution which would otherwise go from the Exchequer to the county council for local purposes. (Cheers.) Now, suppose that plan were in operation and working fairly, just consider what enormous advantages would flow from it in the operation of this measure, and how it would smooth the administration. In the first place, the tenant would have no direct communication whatever with and no knowledge of the British Government. He would not be able to say that a foreign Government was his landlord, and that it was an act of patriotism to refuse to pay his rent. (Cheers.) His creditor would be the local authority, which represented the whole of the rate-payers, a majority of whom would be injured if he refused to pay his rent. (Cheers.) The county council, having been consulted as to the terms of purchase and having given its assent to them, would not be able afterwards to repudiate the transaction and say it was unfair, or endeavour to escape from its conditions. The county council would have a great and powerful inducement to do its duty. It would have the hope of profit if it collected the full agreed rent from all the tenants, and it would have the risk of loss if there were any deficiency and if it had to make up the instalments payable to the Treasury. Now what is the great evil, the great danger, in Ireland under the present system? It is that there is something entirely wrong in the prevalent ideas of morality. It is that, instead of its being considered dishonourable to refuse to pay a just debt, in certain cases it is considered a patriotic act and an act of self-devotion. (Cheers.) If these plans were in operation you would reverse all that. (Cheers.) You would change the public sentiment of the country ; you would secure the opinion of the majority in favour of the payment of just rents, because the non-payment would not as now injure the landlord who has no friends, but it would injure every man in the community. (Cheers.) It has been said by some of my opponents that this is one of my new plans. (Laughter.) Well, I am afraid that whenever they speak of my plans they credit me with greater ingenuity than I possess, and probably they have not taken the trouble to make them-

selves acquainted with my previous utterances. (Laughter.) This is not a new plan. (Cheers.) Whether it be a right or wrong one, whether it be wise or foolish, it only expresses and applies the views which I have publicly proclaimed ever since I began to take part in public life or pronounced any opinion at all on the Irish question. (Cheers.) I have always urged from deep conviction that no settlement, no complete and final and satisfactory settlement of the Irish land question was possible which did not insure the intervention of the local authority. (Cheers.) And therefore I urge this plan now upon the Government. (Cheers.) I urge it because I believe it would be an improvement to the Bill; but if I cannot convince them under that head then I have another arrow in my quiver, and I beg of them to consider that this amendment would be one means, at all events, of meeting the most serious objections that have been taken to the Bill.

#### THE OBJECTION CONSIDERED.

Before going further I am bound to consider the objection which is taken to my proposal, which is a very serious one. When Mr. Balfour spoke on the second reading of the Land Bill he said—and I have the best reason for knowing with what entire sincerity—that he sympathised with the object that I had in view, that he recognised the advantages which would follow under normal circumstances from such a proposal; but he went on to say that Ireland was not in a normal condition, and therefore it would be rash to put into the hands of a local authority, which might be under the control of the National League, so great a power as was proposed. I think that objection may be answered. I will go further even, and say that it is an unfortunate objection. Are we to make no reforms in Ireland until Ireland is in a normal condition? (Cheers.) That would be fatal to the proposal of the Government to give local government to Ireland. It would be dangerous for the same reason to create county councils that it is dangerous when you create them to give to them these powers. The objection reminds me of that very old objection which was satirised, I think, by Macaulay, or some politician of the last generation, when he said that it was like the objection of the man who said that he would not go into the water until he had learned to swim. If you are not going to grant reforms in Ireland until Ireland is in a

normal condition you will have to wait a long while, and it is the chief object of a proposal of this kind, it is its chief recommendation, that it will do a good deal to bring back a normal condition of things to Ireland, when honesty, common honesty, shall again be regarded as a virtue, and not as an offence to be punished by proscription and outrage. (Cheers.)

#### THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

But it is said that the influence of the League will be very great in the election of those councils—at all events, in the first instance. I believe that to be true. It is said that the League, in order to serve the purpose of political agitation, perhaps in order to prolong discontent and irritation, will have the power to put a veto on what is really an Act of the Imperial Parliament, and the Act will, therefore, become a dead letter. I beg you not to be carried away by that objection, which at first sight seems plausible. Do not fear in this instance the influence of the National League in the least. The National League is very powerful when it acts in the interests of the tenants; it is not powerful when it acts against those interests. (Cheers.) On two occasions at least it has tried to induce the tenants to refuse to take advantage of legislation which had been passed for them. In 1881 it tried to prevent tenants from going into the Land Courts. In 1885 and 1887 it tried to prevent them from purchasing under the Ashbourne Acts. On both occasions it signally failed, and I, for my part, would not wish anything better for Ireland than that the League when this Act is passed should set itself against it, and endeavour to throw its influence into the scale and try to prevent the tenants from taking advantage of its provisions. I know perfectly well that under those circumstances its influence would be destroyed. (Hear, hear.) I wish the Government in this point, as in so many others, would have the courage of their convictions. They have told us that they believe that they are granting an enormous boon to the Irish tenant. That is true. Was ever such a boon offered to agricultural tenants in the history of the world? Here is a man who under legal obligation and stress a few years ago was paying a full rent. This man has twice had his rent reduced until now it is 40 or 50 per cent. below its previous amount. The Government go to this man, and they say, "If you will be good

enough to pay for 49 years 20 per cent. less than your twice reduced rent you shall become the absolute owner of your land". (Cheers.) That is the boon which they offer to the Irish tenant. The Government tell us the Irish tenant is shrewd and knows how to take care of himself. Then why will they not trust this shrewdness even to protect him against the machinations of the National League? (Cheers.) It is very easy for the League to teach the tenant dishonesty, when dishonesty does not injure the tenant, but only injures the landlord. It would be quite a different thing for the League to induce the tenant to refuse this great advantage and to lose, perhaps for an indefinite time, the realisation of what has always been his heartfelt desire. (Cheers.) Therefore, I press once more upon the Government and the House of Commons and upon the country the adoption of this proposal. I press for it on its own merits; but I press for it all the more because I believe it would pave the way for that national settlement which I so earnestly desire. (Cheers.) I think with a little goodwill on both sides this settlement might be arrived at; and I call for it, not in the interests of the politicians of any party, least of all of the party which I represent, but I call for it in the interest of Ireland, and in the interest of the good government of the country whose alienation is a source of continual discredit to the British nation. (Cheers.)

#### THE NEW RADICALS.

I have said I do not call for this settlement in the interest of my own party. I do not think that we should derive any special benefit from it. It is quite true that there was a time when I hoped that the differences which separate us from our former friends and colleagues were only temporary differences, and that a moderate and fair and reasonable settlement of the Irish question might be found which would lead to complete reunion. But I have abandoned that hope. (Cheers.) I am not quite certain that the possibility of such a result has not had some influence on the extreme members of the Gladstonian party, those who call themselves, forsooth, the new Radicals—(laughter)—and who oppose any settlement. Their action is natural. In the dissolution of the elements of the Liberal party these gentlemen have floated to the top. (Cheers and laughter.) And it is not likely that the Laboucheres and Conybeares—(hisses)

—would wish to be relegated to their former retirement. (Laughter and cheers.) But I do not think they need to be anxious. (Laughter.) I saw a few days ago that there was a meeting held under the shadow of the sister University of Cambridge, which was addressed by Mr. Asquith. (Cheers.) Mr. Asquith is a distinguished scholar of this seat of learning. (Cheers.) I do not know whether he calls himself a new Radical; but, at all events, he follows the example of those gentlemen in speaking contemptuously, on every occasion, of the Liberal Unionists; and the other day he once more fulfilled the no doubt grateful task of pulverising and smashing and destroying us. (Cheers and laughter.) He said, among other things, that we were only survivals of a political apostacy that had passed away. (Laughter.) I hope we are survivals of the fittest. (Loud cheers.) In any case, I venture to believe that we shall outlast the invective with which he and his friends are pleased to bespatter us. (Cheers.) But Mr. Asquith apparently has been pursuing a course of study in Darwinism. I wish he had carried his researches a little further. He perhaps might have come to the passage in which the great naturalist tells us of insects which, for purposes of self-preservation, or for other advantages, contrive to imitate the appearance, the hues, and even the habits of insects more formidable than themselves. (Laughter and cheers.) He might have found some analogy between the Gladstonian party and those mimicking insects. (Laughter.) Since they have joined the party of plunder and disintegration they have deviated more and more from the original type of Liberals, and they have approached more closely to the objects of their imitative admiration. (Cheers and laughter.) They have carried political variation to the level of a science, and very shortly it will be impossible for any outside observer to distinguish a Gladstonian from a Parnellite. When these men come back to power it will not be Liberal principles which are in the ascendant, but the principles of the Chicago Convention. (Cheers.) We regret the transformation, but under these circumstances we are not likely to impose an unwelcome reunion upon them. (Cheers.) The new Radicals may rest assured that even if in an access of unwonted patriotism they should be content to take this question out of party controversy, and to insure for it a national settlement, there will still remain plenty of subjects of difference. (Cheers.) In any case our course is clear before us. We

will proceed upon the old lines of progress, and we will reject the doctrines which it has been sought to graft upon the old Liberal tree. (Cheers.) We will reject as treason the new theory that contempt can be shown to the authority of the law of the land—(cheers)—the law established by the democracy for its own protection. (Renewed cheers.) We will adhere to the policy which has been maintained by the best and the wisest of our English statesmen and bind together closer and closer the different races and divisions of the United Kingdom. (Cheers.) We will reject the policy of separation, which, commencing at the centre, will extend to the extremities, and which will surely lead to the dissolution of that mighty Empire founded by the valour and the wisdom of those who have gone before, and which we will hand down as a lasting heritage to generations yet to come.





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